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THE EMERGENCE  
OF DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS  
IN JESUS

A dissertation  
submitted to The General Faculty Council  
Committee on Bachelor of Divinity Degrees  
in candidacy for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

by

EDWARD JOHN WIGMORE, B.A.

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA  
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We, the undersigned, testify that we have read and recommend to the General Faculty Council for acceptance a thesis entitled THE EMERGENCE OF DIVINE CONSCIOUSNESS IN JESUS, submitted by Edward John Wigmore, B.A., in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity.





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## PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

### Is this study possible?

"The life of Jesus cannot be written." So began the preface to E.J. Goodspeed's A Life of Jesus. And the assertion would be harsher at the statement of this investigation, which is, in effect, an attempt to discern the self-consciousness of the historic Jesus: "Impossible! A waste of time! Can never be done!"

But E.J. Goodspeed did write a life of Jesus. The reason he gave, and the reasons other able New Testament scholars give, have convinced me that it is not wrong to attempt to write a life of Jesus -- indeed, that it can do much good, even in failure. From here it is but a slight step to hold that it can be worthwhile to attempt a study of Jesus' self-consciousness.

I realize that an attempt even to glimpse into the mind of Jesus may be a hopelessly speculative task. Certainly it can never be done adequately. But I believe the probings of form, literary and historical criticism have done their exacting, minute best -- and worst -- to our Biblical records, and that there remains enough authentic primitive material to allow an attempt at this investigation. William Barclay says there is enough such material in the gospels to reconstruct the basic events in Jesus' life and enter into his mind to some extent.<sup>1</sup> Donald Baillie suggests some of the teachings and narratives of the events of Jesus are so vivid there is a strong likelihood they were genuinely his.<sup>2</sup> S. Cave claims:

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1 - Barclay, W., The Mind of Jesus. London: SCM Press, 1960, p. 7.  
2 - Baillie, D.M., God Was In Christ. London: Faber and Faber, 1961, p. 57.



"The Gospels have preserved for us a few intense utterances which give us passing glimpses into the mystery of his inner life."<sup>1</sup>

However, the justification for this discussion does not rest solely on textual grounds. As Goodspeed says about the life of Jesus that cannot be written: "And yet what life has been so often written?"<sup>2</sup> He felt Jesus' story is so forceful and so influential on human history it can never be ignored -- and that we need to have both emotion and conviction to penetrate its meaning, because Jesus was a man of intense emotion and conviction. Tillich puts it more tersely: "History and Christianity belong together as question and answer."<sup>3</sup> Most of all, however, I prefer to take my cue from a statement that seems to include both the textual and the theological justification for a study such as this:

"...although the Gospels do not succeed fully in revealing him (i.e., his historic personality), they are utterly unable to conceal him."<sup>4</sup>

#### The Three Key Words: Emergence, Divine, Consciousness

To maintain the possibility of such a study as this is not to prove its value. However, I think the validity of such an investigation is obvious, and needs no apologia. But if someone wants a text I will quote him C.C. McCown:

"Before one can face the question 'What think ye of Christ?' one must answer the question 'What did Jesus think of himself?' "<sup>5</sup>

The approach and emphasis of this thesis can be outlined

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- 1 - Cave, S., The Doctrine of the Person of Christ. Cambridge: The University of Cambridge Press, 1925, p. 11.
  - 2 - Goodspeed, E.J., A Life of Jesus. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950, p. 11.
  - 3 - Tillich, P., Religiose Verwirklichung. p. 111.
  - 4 - Knox, J., The Man Christ Jesus. New York: Willet, Clark and Co., 1941, p. 24.
  - 5 - McCown, C.C., The Search For The Real Jesus. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, ~~xx~~ 1940, p. 238.





briefly in a few statements explaining the choice of the three key words of the topic: emergence, divine, and consciousness.

It will be my contention that there was a development in Jesus' self-understanding. In the synoptic tradition, his view of both himself and his mission was not static. Rather, there was a noticeable change in his teaching and in his sense of relationship to the Kingdom of God, particularly before and after Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi. As we shall see, this "growth," if we may call it that, is not present in the fourth gospel, where Jesus is portrayed as the Eternal Son who knows his relation to God and his earthly role without slightest doubt from the beginning, and who is in complete control of all situations at all times. For reasons that I will explain later, I lean towards the synoptic attitude for fidelity.

I have chosen the word "divine" to describe Jesus' self-consciousness rather than the traditional adjective "messianic." This is partly because the former word is not so limiting ("messianic" referring almost wholly to function) and better pin-points my particular interest: who Jesus thought he was personally, in relation to God. There are more indications in the New Testament concerning Jesus' understanding of his mission than his Person (with the exception of John), but I feel these two elements (Person and Work) illuminate each other, and that Jesus' self-consciousness in both of these areas can better be discussed under the adjective "divine." Vincent Taylor, in his use of the term, says the divine consciousness of Jesus is "the sense in which He was conscious of being more than a man, of sharing during His earthly existence in the life of Deity itself."<sup>1</sup> This is

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1 - Taylor, V., The Person of Christ. London: Macmillan and Co., 1958, p. 156.



essentially what I mean by the term.

Perhaps more than any other, the word "consciousness" delineates the scope and emphasis of this study. Essentially, it is an attempt to glimpse something of the inner thought of the historical person Jesus of Nazareth. It is an attempt to apprehend that elusive entity known as "the mind of Jesus." Who did Jesus think he was? How did he see himself in his relationship to God? What did he see as his mission? Here, I must emphasize that I am not particularly interested in what others (the gospel writers, Paul, the early Church) thought of Jesus -- not because it is not significant (it is), but because it is not my topic. My concern is what Jesus thought of himself; what others thought of him becomes relevant only when it appears to reflect what he thought of himself. As we have already noted, this may be an "impossible" task, and before we go on to discuss how we hope to approach it, it may be well to spell out the exact nature of the difficulty of the problem.

#### The Nature of the Problem

Vincent Taylor once said of the attempt to discern the divine consciousness of Jesus:

"The difficulty of the inquiry is apparent from the outset. Every man's personality has its mysteries. It is only approximately, and with inevitable differences of opinion, that we can understand the mind of any great figure of the past. When, however, we consider a personality which, while truly human, transcends human categories, the attempt to describe His self-consciousness seems desperate. It is certainly foredoomed to failure if we expect to do more than apprehend a mystery we cannot solve."<sup>1</sup>

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1 - Ibid., pp. 156-57.





To peer into the mind of a Jew who lived in Palestine more than nineteen centuries ago is certainly a problem fraught with pitfalls. We may compare it to an archeologist going through successive strata, each with its misleading clues and its fool's gold, and then not being sure if he can really reach the final stratum which contains the object of his particular quest. In the present excavation there are many strata through which to work, layers that may lead us to the very bottom (i.e., innermost) one, or which may lead us teasingly close without allowing us to penetrate it.

As our concern here is to establish the nature of the problem rather than state our method of approach, we will not outline the layers that have to be "peeled" before we can reach the mind of Jesus, but instead begin with the mind of Jesus and work outward, through the various phases of transmission, seeing how each in turn could obscure his original thought.

First we have the thoughts and attitudes in the mind of the historical person Jesus of Nazareth. He would translate some of these (the essential ones, we believe) into words and actions. These would be imperfectly perceived by his witnesses (as the gospels forcibly point out). Some of these words and actions (again, the important ones) would be remembered by his witnesses. Some of the remembered items would be passed on, imperfectly. There is evidence from early Christian writings that the items presented in this oral tradition were enunciated "as needed" by Peter and others. Other motives would help decide what the early disciples chose to pass on, particularly those remembrances which reflected the early beliefs about Jesus. Then, of the early oral remembrances, some (we suspect most) would have been set in the first





written records. From here we move to the history of text and translation, which spans the centuries and brings us to today. Finally, as Henry Cadbury has shown in The Peril of Modernizing Jesus, we must be aware of the differences between our Western twentieth century thought-forms and those of a Jew of the first century.

This analysis gives us an idea of the immense and yet delicate nature of the problem. It helps us to see why men have called the task impossible. It may be that they are right, but I hope to show in outlining my approach to the problem (to which we now turn) that some positive conclusions can be drawn from this study.

#### Approach, and Use of Sources

The main body of the thesis is divided into three major parts. Part I is a literary study of the topic. Here, New Testament writings are investigated as literature for their witness to the emergence of divine consciousness in Jesus. This will provide us with the Biblical view on the matter, and if the historical-critical quest of Parts II and III yields little or no conclusive results, we will at least have this.

There is a growing realization among scholars that we must regain the total Biblical tradition in our investigations. These are the Scriptures the Church has selected and nurtured itself on; we must see what they say in their unity as well as in their analyzed parts, or we may be left with nothing but analytical disintegration. This warning has been sounded by C.H. Dodd:



"I conceive it to be the duty of an interpreter at least to see what can be done with the document as it has come down to us before attempting to improve upon it."<sup>1</sup>

Very recently, concurrence has come from the arena of theology. H.P. Van Dusen, in an article (later a book) entitled "Liberal Theology Reassessed," declares:

"It cannot be too emphatically insisted that no single sentence or incident need be claimed as indisputably authentic. But, from the whole, there comes forth a portrait, or group of portraits. In the large, these portraits do not cancel each other out. Rather, they both amplify and correct each other to yield a composite portrait of adequate clarity and reliability. The outlook of that person upon the greater issues of life and faith is sufficiently discernible."<sup>2</sup>

Van Dusen warns that the scepticism of the more radical contemporary New Testament scholars leaves us bereft of the historic reality of Jesus Christ, and that if we do not have this reality we do not have any definitive criteria for judging what is the true "Biblical witness" scholars talk about. His warning is both timely and sound.

Part II of the thesis is the attempt to get at Jesus' self-consciousness by using all the tools and methods of criticism that scholars have been able to muster. The structural "pegs" of the section will be eight major events in the life of Jesus. In Part III I will attempt to formulate some conclusions, including a comparison of Jesus' divine consciousness with the Old Testament prophetic consciousness. I will not try to construct a Christology, but will suggest some guides this study produces in working towards a Christology.

In this investigation the basic approach will be literary and exegetical rather than psychological. I will not ignore any worthy

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1 - Dodd, C.H., The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel. Cambridge: The University Press, 1953 (1960 reprint), p. 290.

2 - Van Dusen, H.P., Union Seminary Quarterly Review; vol. 18, no. 4, May, 1963, "Liberal Theology Reassessed", p. 354.





suggestions offered by psychological insight, but I will not use psychology as my point of view for two reasons: I am not well enough versed in the discipline, and the results of such point of view, applied to a first-century Semite, would seem to me hopelessly speculative (because of psychology's limitations as a science: it deals with the mystery of human personality).

Throughout the thesis the basis of investigation will be the gospels, particularly the synoptic gospels. I realize that they are not the earliest New Testament writings, and that other books have an important contribution to make towards Christology, but I remind the reader that our topic is the self-consciousness of Jesus, not what others thought about him. All New Testament books except the synoptic gospels give us a "finished" Jesus; only the synoptics even purport to sketch a portrait of the historical person, and admit any development in him.

Certainly, the gospels as they now stand were products of the primitive church, and their content was shaped by the church's need and belief and bias. Thus, very little in the gospels escapes the familiar tag "history plus interpretation." Nevertheless, one cannot help but feel that the vividness of some of the sayings, along with the much-witnessed forcefulness of Jesus' personality, is an assurance of the authenticity of some of the teaching and "paradigms" (as Martin Dibelius calls them). And can we not see at least the historical kernel in some of the major events in the life of Jesus? After all, our gospel writers were men of integrity, who included certain passages they could have omitted if they had wanted to present a purely idealistic picture of Jesus. Thus it is unlikely that the drama of major events like the baptism and Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi were pure invention.



By careful sifting one can hope to find a word here, a deed there, hints and clues that give us a glimpse of the mind of Jesus. If we cannot do this, and if we cannot know anything about the real Jesus, we are banking our faith on other fallible human beings' impressions and judgements of him, and we begin to know what Kierkegaard meant when he said faith is an absurd leap. And if our gospels are not essentially trustworthy for a study of Jesus, what is? Has God been deceiving us for 1,900 years? Has He let His Church feed on essential untruth and error all these centuries in the knowledge of the One who revealed Him most fully?

Thus the investigation concentrates upon the gospels. Nevertheless, it does not ignore the contributions of other New Testament writings when their conceptions of Christ appear to reflect something of his own self-consciousness. Indeed, due to their extremely early date of writing and closeness to the life of Jesus and the earliest preaching about him, the epistles of Paul and the "kerygma" of Acts are the first pieces of writing we turn to in Parts I and II respectively. Chronologically, at least, they set the tone for any discussion of who Jesus was (which cannot have helped being influenced by who Jesus thought he was).

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## PART I -- LITERARY STUDY

### 1. Paul's Letters

What insights do the letters of Paul yield of the mind of the historical Jesus? At this point, a reminder: our concern is not primarily who or what Paul thought Jesus was, but rather what his writings reflect of Jesus' own self-consciousness. Paul's view of Jesus is certainly not unimportant, but it is relevant to this investigation only insofar as it can be shown or postulated to be derived from Jesus' own understanding of himself and his mission.

For reasons cited above (p. 8), I have chosen to approach this study primarily through the gospels. However, I begin the literary study, Part I, with Paul because his letters are the earliest New Testament documents which have come down to us in their present form as individual pieces of literature. Because we go "behind" the Book of Acts as it now stands to isolate the kerygmatic preaching, I will not deal with the kerygma here but at the beginning of Part II, the critical study.

It should be said without further delay that Paul's letters cast very little light, specifically and directly, on the emergence of divine consciousness in Jesus. Their value here is that they may give us some general insights into this question, depending largely upon what we establish as the source of Paul's knowledge of Jesus.

The sources of Paul's knowledge of Jesus Christ were, in a sense, very similar to what ours have been or might be. They were two-fold: (1) he knew the story or tradition of the historical Jesus;





(2) he had experience of the risen Christ. (I agree with the scholars who consider it extremely unlikely that Paul knew Jesus in the flesh.)

Two problems immediately present themselves: (1) are we to allow both types of "knowledge" as admissible to our study? (2) which type of knowledge dominated the teaching of Paul, and can we separate them? Concerning the first problem, it follows that since our subject is the historical Jesus, it would not be wrong to limit ourselves to the first type of knowledge. As for the second matter, I think we must realize that the earliest post-resurrection Christians seemed to make no distinction between the historical Jesus and the risen Christ, and that this makes our separation between the influence of the two types of knowledge on Paul's teaching almost impossible, except in some places where he specifically refers to a teaching as derived from the tradition about Jesus.

Paul's apparent lack of interest in the historical life of Jesus not only makes his contribution to the present study difficult to evaluate, but also results in the popular charge that his highly theological gospel bears little resemblance to the simple primitive gospel, that he changed the basic shape of Christianity into a religion about Jesus, and that he, in effect, was the founder of Christianity, not Jesus. Nevertheless, there are at least three good reasons for his rare and sporadic references to the earthly life of Jesus: (1) we possess no complete text of his teaching; (2) he was writing to people within the Church, to whom the tradition of Jesus' life would already be known; and (3) his interests were primarily in the significance of the death and resurrection of Jesus.



It does not follow, however, that Paul was ignorant of the events and teachings of Jesus' earthly ministry. His conversion, baptism and instruction in the new faith took place anywhere from two to seven years after the death of Jesus,<sup>1</sup> at which time he spent two weeks with Peter, and, as C.H. Dodd remarks in a choice tidbit of British understatement, "we may presume they did not spend all the time talking about the weather."<sup>2</sup> This evidence leads Dodd to conclude that Paul's preaching

"...represents a special stream of Christian tradition which was derived from the main stream at a point very near to its source."<sup>3</sup>

We can be sure that Paul, in his intercourse with any of the eye-witnesses, would not have rested until he was told everything they could recall about the earthly life of their Lord. This knowledge is reflected in some of the detail of Paul's account of the Last Supper, the Passion, and the resurrection appearances in I Corinthians. We can only conclude that Paul's silence on the ministry of Jesus is the silence of one who is already familiar with the story and presupposes it in his writings.

Furthermore, while Paul's references to the historical Jesus are scanty, they are numerous enough to show that there was some continuity between the tradition about Jesus and the teaching of Paul, particularly in Paul's statements about ethics and the Christian life. It is also important to see that Paul is careful to make a distinction between his own teaching and that which he received as the Lord's. At least four times he alludes to the direct teaching of "the Lord."<sup>4</sup>

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1 - Dodd, C.H., The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1936, p. 26.

2 - Ibid., p. 26.

3 - Ibid., p. 27.

4 - I Cor. 7:10, 9:14, 11:23; I Thess. 4:15.





But in his teaching concerning the unmarried, he says "I have no command of the Lord" and proceeds to give his own "opinion" (I Cor. 7:25). He also passes on, as "what I also received," teaching concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus (I Cor. 15:3-7).

In the Pauline epistles there are nine simple, factual references to the life of Jesus.<sup>1</sup> None of them yields any specific insight into his self-consciousness, with the possible exception of I Cor. 11:23-26, which tells of Jesus instituting the Lord's Supper. What is only slightly more important for our purposes are the passages which refer to his character: "meekness and gentleness" (2 Cor. 10:1); "knew no sin" (2 Cor. 5:21); "righteousness" (Rom. 5:18); "obedience" (Rom. 5:19); "humbled himself...obedient" (Phil. 2:8); "did not please himself" (Rom. 15:3); "steadfastness" (2 Thess. 3:5). These references tell us some of the features of his personality, if not his self-consciousness. One can also cite evidence from the epistles that Paul knew and propagated the teaching of Jesus as it is recorded in the synoptic tradition.<sup>2</sup> Thus we see the continuity of Paul's thought with that of Jesus.

Jesus' conception of himself as a servant, expressed in Mark 10:45, finds expression in Galatians (5:13, 6:2) and the kenotic Christology passage of Philippeans (2:5-7). Two other Pauline passages seem to confirm the gospels' portrait of Jesus' consciousness of God being his Father in a very personal and intimate way (Rom. 8:14-17, Gal. 4:6, where Paul seems to quote Jesus' words "Abba, Father").

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1 - Rom. 1:3, 5:15, 15:8; Gal. 1:19, 4:4; I Cor. 11:23, 15:4,5; Phil. 2:8.

2 - Rom. 13:7 (Matt. 22:21); Rom. 12:14 (Matt. 5:44); Rom. 14:4,10,13 (Matt. 7:1-5); I Cor. 13:2 (Matt. 17:20); Phil. 4:6 (Matt. 6:25); I Thess. 5:2-8 (Matt. 24:36,43); Gal. 5:14 (Mark 12:31).



Adolf Harnack said the three words expressive of the mind of Christ which most influenced the attitude of Christians in the first three centuries were gentleness, consideration and lowliness of mind.<sup>1</sup> Paul appeals to two of these characteristics in 2 Cor. 10:1, and F.C. Porter attaches real significance to this usage: "the choice of these words...are an important part of his testimony to the mind of Jesus."<sup>2</sup> Porter says these qualities are not found in Jewish apocalyptic expectation, nor Jewish or Stoic wisdom philosophy, nor in the Greek mystery religions; he concludes that their source must have been in Jesus.

It is noteworthy that Paul, writing in the sixth decade of the first century, expresses views of Jesus that Jesus is himself portrayed as expressing in the gospels written fifteen to fifty years later. However, it can be argued that the knowledge of Jesus Paul reflects in certain passages is derived solely from the early tradition about Jesus, which may or may not genuinely reflect the attitude of Jesus himself. Also, there are those who claim that the Pauline view of Jesus helped shape the portraits we have in the gospels. Thus, from Paul's extant writings, we cannot take that final step into the self-consciousness of the historical Jesus.

The only way to overcome this impasse may be the approach suggested by Porter in his book The Mind of Christ in Paul: the subjective and the personal, rather than the literary or historical. He says a Personality confronts us in the gospels, and the total impression of this Personality is manifested in the totality of Paul's

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1 - Porter, F.C., The Mind of Christ in Paul. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1930, p. 38.

2 - Ibid., p. 38.





message. Deeply moved by the spiritual depth and beauty of many Pauline passages, he concludes the only possible answer is that the mind of Jesus was in Paul, completely possessing him, and finding worthy expression in him.

"He knew him as person knows person, with a knowledge which is not history, nor science, nor philosophy, but friendship....He confirms the truth of the general impression (my italics) of the personality of Jesus which the gospels give to those who seek in them for Jesus himself."<sup>1</sup>

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1 - Ibid., p. 41.



## 2. Mark

The second gospel, generally conceded to be the most primitive of the four, affords some valuable insights into the divine consciousness of Jesus. Our concern in this section is the self-consciousness as it is painted in Mark's portrait of Jesus: to cull out and summarize the literary evidence so as first to establish the Biblical position.

Mark's gospel is characterized by a strange juxtaposition: vivid pictures of a mysteriously powerful but definitely human personality appear alongside passages presenting a supra-human figure with divine authority and powers. The second evangelist seems to show no consistent pattern in expressing these two pictures of Jesus. For instance, he does not have Jesus develop from a more human to a more "divine" personality in a neat evolutionary growth. Rather, both emphases are sprinkled intermittently throughout the gospel. Indeed, one might even be tempted to take the opposite view: that the gospel begins with Jesus becoming conscious of his divine Sonship at baptism, and ends with his utterly human sense of loneliness in the cry of dereliction.

As far as Jesus' self-consciousness is concerned, this gospel begins where The Gospel begins: with John the Baptist and the baptism of Jesus. Mark gives us no clue to the spiritual development of Jesus prior to his encounter with John. But it is evident that John's preaching struck a responsive chord in Jesus, even to the extent that Jesus, a Jew who needed no baptism, submitted himself to John's rite.

Why Jesus felt the desire to undergo this baptism, which was "of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (1:4) did not concern Mark and hence does not concern us here. The important thing is the huge significance it is represented as having in the initiation of divine





consciousness in Jesus. The content of the consciousness can be expressed in one word: Sonship. We should note, however, that Jesus says nothing himself, nor does he in Mark's account of the forty days in the wilderness. In these two events, he does not really act or speak; rather, he is the recipient of the action.

The first explicit evidence from Jesus himself concerning his self-consciousness is in his early preaching, which is summarized in Mark 1:15: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." Here he seems to have seen himself as a herald of the imminent coming of the kingdom, very similar to John the Baptist. From this summary there is no indication that he then felt he was the special instrument of its coming, as he indicates later in the gospel. It should be noticed that he came preaching after John was arrested (1:14), and that the content of his early preaching was much like that of the Baptist in Mark 1:4-8: "the time is fulfilled" is implied in John's preaching, and "repent" is his major theme. This (1:15) was to be the general content of Jesus' preaching until Caesarea Philippi.

However, evidence soon piles up that Jesus saw himself as more than an individual, itinerant proclaimer of the kingdom. His calling of the first four disciples (1:16-20) reveals that his sense of mission required the gathering of a group of followers to help him carry out his work. This work meant more than preaching and teaching: it included healing and exorcism. At this point (1:23ff.) Mark does not give Jesus' reason for healing, although he soon suggests it is because of his compassion for the people (1:41). Nevertheless, in a passage that shows Jesus did have a strong sense of being called to a particular mission (1:38), he feels his major task is preaching.



It is from his healing ministry, however, that we first get concrete evidence of a divine consciousness in the mind of Jesus himself: he forgives the paralytic his sins (2:5). This is the function of no mere herald, but of a man who senses in himself some form of divine authority. The argument that it might have been the practice for itinerant preachers and healers to pronounce forgiveness of sins is weakened by the reaction of the scribes: "It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (2:7). Also, Jesus at this point still accepts traditional Jewish religious customs (1:44b).

In this same cluster of opposition stories we are introduced to Jesus' title for himself: Son of man (2:10). Here, the context gives us little indication of what he means and we will discuss it at length later in the thesis. It is very interesting that only a few verses later he anticipates the role that is to become dominant in his self-consciousness at, and after, Caesarea Philippi: "The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day" (2:20). Here Jesus seems to consider himself one whose person is important, and who will be taken away from his followers, an event that will inspire fasting.

Still in the context of the opposition stories, Jesus teaches that as Son of man he has a certain lordship over the sabbath day (2:28). It is not completely clear what Jesus meant by "the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath" but we can at least say that he feels he has the authority to make assertive statements about this favourite tenet of Pharisaic Judaism, and to claim a transcendancy over it. Here again he seems to step beyond his self-consciousness as a herald of the kingdom. No mere mortal, even a prophet, says he is lord of the sabbath.





Throughout this gospel it is usually the unclean spirits who make the claim that Jesus is Son of God. In 3:12 Jesus implies his acceptance of this title: "And he strictly ordered them not to make him known." Here we see Mark's characteristic "Messianic secret" theme developing.

In the following section, when Jesus selects his twelve disciples, he gives them authority to preach and cast out demons. The nature of this authority is almost impossible to discern, but its source is that which gave Jesus his own consciousness of a preaching mission. Here we see that consciousness confirmed in concrete action.

Of all the teaching attributed to Jesus by Mark during this period of the Galilean ministry, the one which most shows a transcendent, divine consciousness in Jesus is found in 3:28,29:

"Truly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin."

Here Jesus seemingly claims to know how God will finally treat all sinners, and the one sin that will not be forgiven. He is professing to know, with complete certainty, the will of the eternal God. Yet, he does it in a strange way: he does not acknowledge God's authority in so many words. He does not even mention His name.

In both his nature miracles and his feeding miracles, Jesus seems to rely on his own power, rather than invoke the help of God. Nevertheless, he does feel a need for prayer (1:35). Of course, his invocation of God's help does not have to be verbalized. Or it may be simply that Mark overlooks it.

Jesus feels he has the authority to tell his followers what the kingdom of God is like (4:26 ff.). He not only exorcizes evil



spirits, but he gives them permission to enter swine (5:13). And in 5:30, Mark represents Jesus as feeling his special power magically drained from him when the woman with the issue of blood touches his garment. However, when Jesus returns to his own country this power loses its magical nature and takes on a very human characteristic -- it is not very effective among his own kin and associates (6:1-6).

The "two-by-two" mission of the twelve which follows this rejection shows Jesus still felt his work was to be a herald, and his men a group of heralds. The three main tasks of the group were: to preach repentance, to cast out demons, and to heal the sick. The first item corresponds to Jesus' original individual preaching in 1:15, but the others seem to have been added by experience and necessity. Does this mean the edge was beginning to wear off the imminent nature of the kingdom which Jesus saw it his job to proclaim? Subsequent teachings and events make this a strong possibility.

Shortly after this, and directly upon the heels of another clash with the Pharisees (in which he calls their brand of religion a rejection of the commandment of God, 7:9), Jesus withdraws to Tyre and Sidon. Here we have an extremely significant event in the development of his self-consciousness. As we will see in Part II, I am suggesting it provided the buildup for Jesus' question "Who do men say that I am?" (8:27) at Caesarea Philippi, an hypothesis which I will work out in some detail then. Suffice it here to say that Jesus felt a desire or need to be alone and think things over. There is no direct immediate evidence of the withdrawal influencing his thinking in any way, except what may be implied in his decision to heal the Gentile child and then to return via Gentile territory (the Decapolis).





There is, however, literary evidence in the following episodes that Jesus felt a growing dissatisfaction with his understanding of his mission. In 7:34, he "sighs" as he heals a man, as though he were getting rather impatient with this kind of ministry. And in 8:12 he "sighs deeply" when the Pharisees come to bother him again. In 8:14-21 he speaks out rather sharply to the disciples, deploring their dullness. Some great question seems to be bothering him. Possibly it is the question he asks not long afterward at Caesarea Philippi: "Who do men say that I am?" Mark implies Jesus' acceptance of Peter's confession "You are the Christ" by following it with the comment "And he charged them to tell no one about him" (8:29,30).

It is here that the divine consciousness of Jesus takes on the essential form it is to maintain through the rest of the gospel: that Jesus is the Son of man who must suffer, be rejected by the Jewish authorities, be killed, and rise again (8:31). Apart from being hinted at in 2:20, this is a new teaching. And on its heels comes another, expressing a different role for the Son of man: that he will come in the glory of his Father with the holy angels (8:38). So we have an earthly, suffering Son of man who is to become a heavenly, glorified Son of man. In enunciating this second teaching, Jesus also confirms his conviction that the coming of the kingdom of God is imminent (9:1).

It is in the section between these two teachings that Jesus claims to know who will save his life and who will lose it. This is an assertion that can have its source only in one who claims a special divine consciousness, a clear line of communication with the eternal God who gives and takes away life.



Six days later we have an event which seems to confirm that of Caesarea Philippi: the Transfiguration. The form and content of this event is very similar to the baptism of Jesus: a voice comes out of heaven saying "This is my beloved Son" (9:7). Jesus himself says nothing until the vision is over and he and the three closest disciples are coming down the mountain. At this time he reaffirms his teaching that the Son of man must die and rise again. In his amplification of this teaching (9:10-13), Jesus shows that Scripture is one of its sources (although it may also be argued that Jesus didn't see Scripture as a source of his teaching, but as a confirmation of it).

In 9:37 Jesus explicitly expresses a consciousness of being sent into the world by God to carry out His work, which is a logical development of his new understanding of himself. Four verses later Jesus again implies his acceptance of the title "Christ" when he speaks of his disciples bearing the name of Christ. This is the first time he uses the word, referring to himself.

At this point Jesus begins his journey towards Jerusalem, and chapter ten records these incidents "on the road" which give further insights into his self-consciousness: he claims to know why Moses gave the commandment concerning divorce (10:5); he says "No one is good but God alone" but feels confident enough in his knowledge of God to say how to win eternal life (10:17+22); he repeats his fate, in greater detail (10:32-34); he senses an awareness that he must drink a special cup and be baptized with a special baptism (10:38); he implies acceptance of the idea that he will come in glory, but insists it is not up to him to grant places at his right or left hand (10:40); and, finally, he says he came not to be served but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many (10:45).





It is difficult to say with certainty what the entry into Jerusalem reveals of Jesus' divine consciousness, even on a surface reading. From his orders to the disciples it is apparent he wished to enter the city in this manner; it is not something that was shoved upon him. His use of a colt "on which no one has ever sat" is significant because in those days an animal intended for sacred use must be unbroken,<sup>1</sup> and because the animal could have been used as a symbol for lowliness or peace (after Zech. 9:9). For the full discussion see below, p. 112. Jesus also calls himself "The Lord" (most commentators say for the first time; I say he uses it to refer to himself--not God--in 5:19). But Jesus' own intimations stop here and his followers take over with their demonstration. The whole affair looks like the coming of the heavenly Son of man acted out in an earthly, historical situation, but we cannot be sure.

An event on the following day does nothing to change Mark's portrait of Jesus' divine self-consciousness, but it does detract from our picture of Jesus' practical human knowledge: he should have known the fig tree would not have any fruit out of season (11:3). At the conclusion of this chapter, when Jesus is challenged by the priests and scribes in the temple to state his authority for what he did, he admits he does have such an authority but refuses to divulge it.

From this point on, Jesus uses the Scriptures more and more in expressing his sense of mission. He concludes the parable of the absentee landlord (12:1-9) with a passage from Ps. 118, in which he seems to see himself as the stone which the builders rejected, but which would become

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1 - Grant, F.C., The Interpreter's Bible, vol. 7. New York: The Abingdon Press, 1951, p. 825.



the head of the corner. In his reply to the Sadducees' trick question about the resurrection Jesus quotes a passage from Exodus, although the important thing here is that he claims to know what life will be like in the resurrection. (12:25) Jesus uses the Scriptures to repudiate the idea that the Christ is the Son of David (12:25, cf. Ps. 110:1).

The "Little Apocalypse" of chapter 13 presents a major exegetical problem which we will consider in Part II. As it now stands, however, it suggests a divine foreknowledge within Jesus in five areas: natural and human strife, violence and persecution; false Christs and prophets in religious teaching; what has made the salvation of human beings possible; the time of the great eschatological event; and the nature of the Son of man's role in this event. The use of the third person pronoun to describe the Son of man raises the possibility that Jesus did not see himself as this figure, but the general trend of evidence is that he did. If this is true, Jesus here views himself as one who has not only a unique eschatological role in God's salvation-history, but as one who has a transcendent knowledge of the future and a direct line of communication with the will of God.

Jesus senses that somehow a message will be preached to the whole world about him in the days to come, or at least that it will include that which happened to him (14:9). In 14:18 Jesus expresses his awareness that one of his disciples will betray him, and in the discussion that follows he tells them "the Son of man goes as it is written of him," again suggesting that one of the sources of his self-consciousness was the Scriptures. This point is confirmed again and again in the passion narrative.

One of the really puzzling questions of this study is what





the Last Supper reveals of Jesus' divine consciousness. Even at a strictly literary reading one is hard-pressed for an answer. Here we may have little more than a Jewish fellowship meal of the first century. But the timing (first day of Unleavened Bread) and Jesus' statement "where I am to eat the passover with my disciples" (14:14) supports the theory that Jesus was celebrating the traditional Jewish feast and using it as a particularly meaningful farewell event.

Jesus' teaching that the bread and wine is his body and blood, and the saying that the blood is "poured out for many" (14:24) are the most relevant parts of the Supper for this investigation. These indicate Jesus' feeling that something of his essence would be in them when he was gone, and that he saw his death not as a meaningless event but one that was purposeful. The last sentence of his discourse indicates a feeling that he would exist as a personality again (or continue to exist but withdraw for a while), and that when he did certain things again the kingdom of God would have arrived (14:25).

The agony of Jesus in Gethsemane, as it stands in the gospel, requires little comment in this Part. It seems clear that the very nearness of his arrest and death brings a profound distress to Jesus. Here his consciousness of being the heavenly, divine Son of man fades into the background before his consciousness of his physical limitations and capacity for suffering. He may have never lost this human consciousness, but here we see it vividly stroked into the gospel portrait. Here Jesus seems to see himself as a man who may be used of God in a very difficult way, and as such he prays for God's strength to face it.

Jesus' reply to the high priest's question in 14:61,62 is of



extreme importance to our whole investigation, and it is a text which requires full critical and exegetical treatment (see Part II, p. 124). Here, we take Jesus' answer as it stands: he says he is the Christ, the Son of the Blessed. But we should notice that in his exposition of the statement, which follows immediately, he puts this title aside and expresses his self-consciousness in the more familiar (to him) and enigmatic (to us) term "Son of man." Here, he talks of the heavenly Son of man, who will be seen "sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (14:62). Thus Jesus confirms a self-consciousness enunciated in 8:38 and chapter 13.

After this, Jesus makes no reply to the questions and endures the mockings and crucifixion in silent dignity. His only other words in the gospel are found in the haunting cry of dereliction: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (15:34). There have been many interpretations of this and we will look at some of them in Part II. For instance, it has been suggested that Jesus was quoting **all** of Ps. 22 (Mark recording only the first verse), a psalm which ends in faith and victory. Here, however, we have simply the bald, ominous first verse suggesting that Jesus' consciousness of the nearness of God failed him at the moment of death. It is a good thing that the Gospel does not end here. It is simply where this gospel ends its account of the human life of Jesus of Nazareth.

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### 3. Matthew

Passages of Scripture which yield insights into the divine consciousness of Jesus are of at least two types: direct statements of his relationship to God in either person or function, and passages in which he makes ontological and eschatological assertions, utterances which indicate that his mind uniquely comprehends the will and purpose of the eternal God.<sup>1</sup> Both of these types of passages are found in Matthew, and in greater abundance than in Mark. However, most of the major events and many of the important sayings which bear on our topic in Matthew are also found in the Markan material we have just discussed. When this occurs, and there is no essential difference between the two gospels, we will refer to the Matthew passage without extensive comment, due to its treatment in the last chapter.

As far as our topic is concerned, this gospel also begins with the baptism, because the historical Jesus gives no explicit indication that he was influenced by -- or indeed, that he ever knew of -- the tradition of his virgin birth, which is recorded in the first two chapters. If one accepts the birth stories as historical fact, however, he is entitled to argue that Jesus' divine consciousness could have been influenced by them.

With two exceptions, Matthew's account of Jesus' baptism is very similar to Mark's. One of these exceptions is of some importance to our study. Matthew records that John would have refused to baptize Jesus, but our Lord said "...it is fitting for us to fulfill all

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1 - We use the word "uniquely" without apology, although we realize the prophets claimed such a comprehension of Divine Will. We discuss the difference between Jesus' claim and that of the prophets at length in Part III, chapter 2 below.



righteousness" (3:15). We have here the first of considerable evidence in this gospel that Jesus saw himself and his work as the fulfillment of the Jewish religious tradition. He emphasizes the point in his "sermon on the mount": "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them."<sup>1</sup> At his arrest Jesus refuses to invoke divine help because

"...how then should the scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?...But all this has taken place, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."<sup>2</sup>

Matthew's temptation narrative offers us some assistance in our quest: it confirms the experience of Sonship in Jesus, by implication. Jesus is acted upon in the baptism; here he has the opportunity to show that he has accepted this Sonship, and that he will remain loyal to it, despite the wiles and temptations of Satan. Indeed, the simple fact that Jesus responds to Satan's call "if you are the Son of God" implies Jesus' awareness of some special Sonship. It may be that Jesus conceived this confrontation by the tempter as a testing of this new relationship.

In this gospel, as in Mark, Jesus began to preach when John the Baptist was arrested. The summary of Jesus' preaching is very simple: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (4:17), suggesting that Jesus sees himself as a herald of the kingdom. As in Mark, he feels a need for helpers in this task and calls the "inner" four disciples to become "fishers of men" (4:19).

In the body of teachings commonly known as the "sermon on the mount," Jesus manifests a sense of authority and a knowledge of future rewards and punishments.<sup>3</sup> These may mean simply a close acquaintance

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1 - Matt. 5:17.

2 - Matt. 26:54,56.

3 - Matt. 5:5,10,12; 6:1-6; 7:11.





with his Hebrew scriptures, but passages near the end of the "sermon" indicate he considers his knowledge more uniquely-derived than this. He speaks of "my Father who is in heaven" and says "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven" (7:21,22). Here Jesus sees himself in a very special relationship to God, and as a powerful heavenly being at the close of the age, to whom people will turn to get into the kingdom of heaven, a being in whose name people will have prophesied and cast out demons and done mighty works.

In chapters 8 to 10 Matthew records several relevant events and teachings which we discussed in the chapter on Mark: Jesus forgiving the sins of the paralytic, telling the leper to go to the priest and offer a sacrifice, saying "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners," anticipating his death in terms of the bridegroom and his party, giving authority to the disciples to heal and preach, and saying "he who receives me receives him who sent me."<sup>1</sup>

Matthew portrays Jesus as expressing his sense of having a suffering and dying role more often than Mark does before Caesarea Philippi. In addition to the example in 9:15, we see it again in 12:40:

"For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Jesus also foretells the persecution of the disciples for his sake, in 10:16-23. He feels he will make a real impact on surrounding nations in the future. Curiously, though, he speaks of the disciples bearing testimony before Gentiles, but at the conclusion of the same discourse he says they will not have gone through all the town of Israel before the Son of man comes.

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1 - 9:2, 8:4, 9:13, 9:15, 10:1, 10:40.



There are several instances in which Jesus displays the consciousness that he will have the role of a heavenly, divine being (usually "Son of man") at the close of the age.<sup>1</sup> The abundance of evidence, well scattered throughout the gospel, leads one to the conclusion that Jesus' self-consciousness included a strong apocalyptic element, in which he saw his earthly work as a preliminary step to the close of the age and the coming of the kingdom, at which time he would be revealed as a powerful, judgemental heavenly figure, coming in glory with his angels. This concept, along with that of the earthly, suffering Son of man, will be examined more closely in Parts II and III. Our point here is that it is strong in Matthew.

That Jesus developed a strong messianic consciousness in his Galilean ministry is seen in another episode: his reply to John's query "Are you he who is to come?" (11:3). Jesus does not say yes or no; he says in effect "look at my works" -- implying that the answer is yes. This implication seems confirmed in his quotation of Malachi 3:1, and his explicit statement that for those who will accept it, John the Baptist was Elijah, who was to come just before the Messiah (11:14).

In a very significant passage near the end of this chapter, Jesus makes a statement about his sense of relationship with God that sounds like a text right out of the Fourth Gospel:

"All things have been delivered to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."<sup>2</sup>

Here Jesus refers to himself as "the Son," which is uncommon for him in this gospel; he stresses "knowledge," which is also unusual; he emphasizes

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1 - 7:21-23; 10:23; 13:37-43; 16:27,28; 19:28; 24:30,31; 25:31.

2 - Mt. 11:27.





the exclusiveness of Father and Son, and yet the very close relationship between them; he indicates he has a unique authority and revelation from the Father, and that he is the agent of this revelation to men. Another nearby passages which shows how Jesus conceived of his relationship to the Father (and the Spirit) is 12:28: "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

Jesus sees himself not only as one who demands our love, but who requires of us a love that is greater than that which we hold for our parents or children (10:37). He sees his coming as an event which does not bring us peace, but forces us to a decision (10:34,35). Indeed, he considers his coming so important in the history of his tradition that he asserts his priority over the temple, Jonah, and Solomon (12:6,41,42). As in Mark, he says he is lord of the sabbath (12:8). There are several instances in which Jesus professes to know what will happen on judgement day, how different types of people will fare (8:11,12; 10:15; 11:24; 12:31,32,36,37).

All of the events and teachings discussed above occur before the withdrawal to the region of Tyre and Sidon. Compared to the corresponding section in Mark, they show a more "finished" divine consciousness in Jesus, particularly his self-concept as the heavenly, archetypal Son of man, the certainty of his eschatological teachings, his greater anticipation of his role as the earthly, suffering Son of man, and his concept of his unique Sonship, especially as seen in 11:27. Little of real significance is added to these concepts in the rest of the gospel; they are merely drawn in greater detail after the events of Tyre and Sidon and Caesarea Philippi, particularly that of the suffering Son of man. Jesus still retains his concept of the kingdom of heaven, even though his view of his relationship to it appears to have changed from his original preaching. We see evidence of this retention in chapter 13,



which is largely a series of parables on the nature of the kingdom.

There is a very strong indication in this gospel that not only the teaching but also the death of John the Baptist exerted a tremendous influence on Jesus' view of his person and his role. Scholars give different reasons for Jesus' withdrawals to a lonely place(14:13) and to the district of Tyre and Sidon (15:21), but it seems the most likely explanation , in view of the wording of 14:13, that John's murder caused Jesus to reflect upon his own role with a new profundity, born of experience and tragedy. At the conclusion of the first withdrawal, Jesus spent a late afternoon and evening alone in prayer (14:23). Not long afterwards, when Jesus returned from Tyre and Sidon, he went into the hills and sat (15:29). It seems Matthew is trying to say Jesus was pondering a great question, and this is noteworthy because this meditative element is not one of the characteristics of Matthew's portrait of our Lord. We should also note, however, that there are two ways in which Matthew plays down this same element in his report of the withdrawal to the region of Tyre and Sidon: he doesn't say, as Mark does, that Jesus wished to go incognito, and the disciples are along on this trip.

There are important additions in Matthew's account of Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi which bear directly on our investigation. The main one is Jesus' affirmation of Peter's confession that he is the Christ, the Son of the living God:

"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven."<sup>1</sup>

The full exegetical treatment of this reply will be discussed in Part II; here we accept it for what it seems to be, an acceptance of the avowal.

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<sup>1</sup> - Matt. 16:17.





It is in the continuation of Jesus' statement to Peter that we find evidence that Jesus intended to institute a church, or establish an assembly of his followers -- that is, if the passage is genuine. The problem is rather complicated. The Greek text, in recording Jesus' reply, uses the term ἐκκλησίαν, which had two meanings in first-century Christian usage: church, and assembly of God's people (these are actually shades of meaning rather than different meanings). In the English versions, the Matthew usage has been translated "church." But a greater problem than that of deciding which meaning Jesus had in mind is that posed by the dearth of similar usages to support it. The Greek word is found only one other time in the gospels (18:17), and there it is used in a teaching which assumes there already is a church, and, in addition, it seems to mean a local congregation. Thus suspicion is thrown upon this verse (16:18) as a genuine utterance of Jesus, and if we are to be certain that he intended to build up some sort of a gathered following we will have to look elsewhere.

Matthew, as Mark, records that from this time on Jesus began to teach the necessity of his suffering and death, although in Matthew we have already had two strong hints of this (Matt. 9:15, 12:40), compared to Mark's one (2:20). Matthew's account of the Transfiguration is essentially the same as that of Mark: the voice from heaven saying "This is my beloved Son"; Elijah has come (in John the Baptist); and the Son of man must suffer and then be raised (17:1-13).

After this important succession of events -- the withdrawals, Caesarea Philippi, the Transfiguration -- we find Jesus still healing, teaching of the kingdom of heaven (18:4, 19:23) and, more significantly, telling what God is like (19:26; 20:1-16). And as in Mark, we find



Jesus asking if others are able to drink the cup that he has to drink, accepting the idea that someone will sit at his right and left hand in his glory, and saying that it is not his to grant (20:23). However, through all this he senses his path must lead him resolutely towards Jerusalem, and chapter 21 finds him making his "triumphal entry" into the historic city. Matthew's account of this event sheds no more light on Jesus' self-consciousness than Mark's, although we might note that the crowds in the first gospel say "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth of Galilee (21:11).

Indeed, the whole succession of events and teachings in Matthew's Passion narrative from the entry into Jerusalem to Gethsemane attest to Jesus' divine consciousness in the same way they do in Mark. In very brief summary: Jesus refuses to divulge his authority, but admits he has one (21:27); he quotes Ps. 118 as applying to himself, that the stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner (21:42); he claims to know what the resurrection-life will be like (22:23-33); he shows the Pharisees that the Christ cannot be the Son of David (22:41-w); he utters a long apocalyptic discourse in which the Son of man is pictured as coming in glory with angels (24:1-36); he teaches that his gospel will be preached in the whole world (26:13); he quotes Zechariah 13:7, that the shepherd will be struck and the sheep scattered (26:31). The accounts of Gethsemane and the Last Supper are essentially the same, with the exception that in Matthew's report of the Supper Jesus' speech includes "which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (26:28). Also, Matthew alone (of the synoptics) records Jesus saying, just before the Supper "My time is at hand" (26:18).

In two instances, however, Matthew does offer single-source





utterances of Jesus which are relevant to our topic. In 23:10, Jesus says to his disciples "Neither be called masters, for you have one master, the Christ" -- another addition to this gospel's evidence that Jesus accepted the title. In 25:31-46, another apocalyptic passage about the heavenly Son of man, Jesus appears to use the title "King" of himself. Here he also speaks of "my Father," and sees himself in a judgemental role at the last day (25:31-46).

In Matthew's account of the arrest and trial of Jesus there are two divergencies from the Markan record which are important for our study. At his arrest, Jesus claims he could easily escape by appealing to his Father, who would send twelve legions of angels to help him, but that he submits to them so that the Scriptures might be fulfilled (26:53). Matthew alone records this statement.

Matthew's other point of departure from Mark is in Jesus' answer to the high priest's question asking him if he is the Christ. In 26:64 he replies "You have said so" and goes on to tell of the coming of the Son of man. This enigmatic response, also given to Pilate's query (27:11), carries a number of shades of meaning and has brought on much speculation among scholars. It is in vivid contrast to the clear-cut "I am" in Mark 14:62. What Jesus meant by these answers, if it is possible to discern, is more properly a question for Part II. Throughout the remainder of his trial and mockings, Jesus maintained a silent dignity.

The only other words of Jesus recorded in Matthew are those of the cry of desolation in 27:46. Their significance here is no clearer than it is in Mark, and we can only hope to interpret them properly in the full exegetical discussion of Part II. For reasons advanced in the previous chapter, our investigation does not include consideration of



the resurrection-stories: because their subject is no longer the historical Jesus, but the risen Christ.

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#### 4. Luke

Luke's portrayal of Jesus' self-consciousness has many affinities with that of the first two gospels, and where the material is identical or similar we will refer the reader to the previous chapter(s) to avoid burdensome repetition. However, the third gospel does have its own characteristics, some of which are important for our study. We will focus upon these.

The birth stories again play no vital role in our investigation because Jesus, in Luke also, gives no indication that he was influenced by, or even knew of, them. However, in the case of this gospel, there is one qualifying factor: the childhood stories. The evidence is that his parents were devout Jews. They had the child Jesus circumcized (2:21), they brought him to Jerusalem for the purification rite and offered sacrifices (2:22,24), they went every year to the Passover (2:41), and generally "performed everything according to the law" (2:39). This could not have helped but influence Jesus' early religious thinking, steeping him in the rich tradition of his forefathers and making God a reality in his life. This seems confirmed in two verses summing up his physical, mental and spiritual development (2:40,52), and especially in his own statement at the end of the incident where he was found in the temple with the teachers: "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (2:49).

One of the strange things in the third gospel is that the account of Mary's closeness to Elizabeth, which is peculiar to the Lukan birth stories, is not followed up in the adult intercourse of Jesus and



John. Indeed, John's influence upon Jesus is restricted in this gospel: it is the only one of the synoptics to say Jesus didn't begin to preach when he heard John was arrested.

Nevertheless, John's influence upon Jesus was not negligible. The Baptist's preaching contained an ethical element ringing with concrete examples (3:10-14) -- a feature of Jesus' later teaching. At this point Luke gives direct evidence that the age was filled with messianic expectancy: "As the people were in expectation..." (3:15). Did this environmental feature influence Jesus' self-consciousness? We might note also that Luke extends John's quotation from Isaiah, making it more universal: "...all flesh shall see the salvation of God" (3:5,6). This note of universality was to be reflected in Jesus' later teaching.

Luke's account of the baptism, which mentions the rite itself in a slightly offhand manner (3:21), nevertheless expresses the common synoptic sense of impact it had upon Jesus. Here also we see another Lukan characteristic: Jesus "was praying" when the Holy Spirit descended upon him and he heard God's voice (3:21). Other references to his prayer life occur in 4:42, 5:16, 6:12, 9:18,28, 11:1, 18:1 and 22:32. They help reveal the means by which Jesus gained much of his religious awareness.

There is no summary of Jesus' earliest preaching in Luke, just as there is no indication it was precipitated by the arrest of John. However, Jesus' first teaching activity does follow the temptation account, which is very similar to that of Matthew. Luke chooses to replace such a summary with the event at the Nazareth synagogue, in which Jesus reads a passage from Isaiah:





"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord".<sup>1</sup>

He concluded the reading with this pronouncement: "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (4:21). This is direct evidence that Jesus saw himself as a herald of the Lord, although here he doesn't express the object of his proclamation (the kingdom of God) in quite the same way. Rather, he expresses it in terms of new life for the impoverished and the oppressed.

Jesus then proceeded to teach in synagogues, on the sabbath day, both before and after the people at Nazareth tried to throw him over a cliff (4:16,31,33). This indicates, at this point in his ministry at least, a retention of Jewish attitudes in his self-consciousness.

Another very clear illustration of his early sense of mission is found in 4:43: "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose." Here is confirmation that Jesus was thinking in terms of the kingdom of God in his statement and reading in the synagogue at Nazareth. It is also the first explicit evidence that he felt he was sent for a purpose (which is different than feeling you are called). This seems to me to be a major difference between Jesus' sense of mission and that of any other proclaimer or religious leader, although much depends on from what or whom one is sent. The Old Testament prophets sometimes seemed to feel they were sent from God; did Jesus mean it this way, or in a more actual metaphysical sense?

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1 - Luke 4:18,19; Isaiah 61:1,2.



The call of the four closest disciples, though it is couched in a different form than in Mark and Matthew, expresses the same need in Jesus for a group of men about him to teach and send out (5:1-11). Luke then records four other relevant passages which we have discussed in previous sections: Jesus forgives sins (5:20); he came to call sinners to repentance (5:32); he anticipates his death in the bridegroom metaphor (5:35); he claims the Son of man is lord of the sabbath (6:5 ). The context of these teachings is the cluster of opposition stories, and one wonders to what extent Jesus' self-consciousness was shaped by these clashes with the religious legalists of his day, and by the spiritual deadness that was apparently in most of them.

Jesus' "sermon on the plain" gives us approximately the same insight into his mind as Matthew's similar body of teaching, notably that Jesus seemed to know with certainty divine rewards and punishments. We might also note here that his favourite term for himself is Son of man, while that of the people is Lord (sometimes Teacher), and that of the demons is Son of God.

Luke confirms Matthew in Jesus' implied affirmation in reply to John's question if he is the one to come (7:18-27). In his explanation of the parable of the sower, Jesus says it has been given to them to know the secrets of the kingdom. This means, of course, that Jesus felt he had these secrets to give. As in the other synoptics, Jesus gives the demons leave to enter the swine (8:32), and he gives the disciples power and authority over demons (9:1,2). His preaching is still based on the kingdom of God (8:1, 9:11). However, we come to a major break with Mark and Matthew, as far as Jesus' self-consciousness is concerned, when we approach Caesarea Philippi (9:18-27).





Some of the differences in Luke's account of Peter's confession are: the event is not preceded by a withdrawal to the region of Tyre and Sidon (although there is a withdrawal to Bethsaida, 9:10); it is not directly stated to result from his learning of the death of John the Baptist; Jesus was praying alone just before Peter's confession; the words of the confession are "the Christ of God."

However, from this point on Luke agrees with Mark and Matthew: Jesus' tacit acceptance of the confession; his teaching that the Son of man must suffer and die and that he who loses his life will save it; and his claim that the Son of man will come in glory with holy angels. This is the first mention of the heavenly Son of man in Luke. The third evangelist uses this figure several times later in Jesus' teaching, but not to the extent of the first two.

Luke's report of the Transfiguration is basically the same as that of the first two gospels, although it is not followed by the direct statement that Elijah came in John the Baptist. However, in the section following the Transfiguration, Luke has three statements of Jesus relevant to our topic that are also in Mark and Matthew: "O perverse and faithless generation, how long am I to be with you?" (9:41); "The Son of man is to be delivered into the hands of men" (9:44); "Whoever receives me receives him who sent me" (9:48, 10:16). The first two especially show Jesus' growing awareness that it is his death and going away from his friends that is to make his work efficacious.

At this point Luke tells us Jesus "set his face to go to Jerusalem," and his choice of verb is significant: he employs the Greek root  $\sigma\tau\eta\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma\omega$ , which means to set fast or fix. The King James Version attempts to bring out the full meaning of the verse (9:51)



by attaching the adjective "steadfastly," while the New English Bible chooses "resolutely." The Greek text has no adverb, but the meaning is nevertheless quite clear: Jesus has come to the understanding that this journey is something he must do. It is helpful to keep in mind that the rest of his teaching (nearly ten chapters of it, including many parables) occurs as he works his way to Jerusalem and the fate he feels awaits him there.

Luke alone records that Jesus sent seventy men ahead of him to preach the nearness of the kingdom. Here we see how some of the basic ideas of Jesus' early preaching remained with him as he worked towards Jerusalem. When the seventy return Jesus tells them their names are written in heaven (Luke 10:1-12) and shortly afterward makes his "Johannine" claim of exclusive knowledge of the Father (10:22; cf. Mt. 11:27). On the heels of this is another utterance found also in Matthew: "many prophets and kings desired to see what you see" (10:23,24). This is another log in the pile of implicit evidence that Jesus saw himself in some way as the Expected One of the Hebrew religion.

Yet, in other places, Jesus' self-consciousness reveals what we might call a "post-Jewish" trend, particularly when he teaches of the Holy Spirit (a Lukan feature). In 11:13 he knows that "the heavenly Father (will) give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" As in Matthew, he feels it is by the finger of God that he casts out demons (11:20), and that in him something greater than Solomon or Jonah is here (11:31,32). This greatness Jesus expresses more and more in an apocalyptic framework, and his concept of himself as the heavenly Son of man becomes more dominant.





In 12:8 Jesus expresses the need for men to acknowledge him, and that he in turn (as Son of man) will acknowledge them before the angels of God. He claims to know that blasphemy against himself will be forgiven, but that it will not be forgiven against the Holy Spirit. He feels he knows the "Father's good pleasure" (12:32), and that the Son of man is coming at an hour they do not expect (12:40). His apocalyptic self-consciousness and statement of purpose is most vividly expressed in 12:49-51:

"I came to cast fire upon the earth; and would that it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division...."

Some of the parables in these chapters also reveal Jesus' understanding himself to have a heavenly, judgemental role at the close of the age. In 13:23-28 he uses the metaphor of the householder to describe himself as rejecting certain people, and goes on to say that some foreigners will sit at table in the kingdom of God.

Yet Jesus does not lose sight of his earthly role. He feels he is in some sense a prophet, and that he must die in Jerusalem. (13:33) When the Pharisees ask him when the kingdom of God is coming he replies it is not coming with signs but "it is in the midst of you" (17:20). The critical question concerning the nature of the kingdom of God in Jesus' teaching rages on in scholarship, but here he seems to say it was realized, and possibly implies that it came in or with him.

The passage that best combines Jesus' concept of himself as both the earthly and heavenly Son of man is 17:22-30. Here Jesus alludes to his disciples' desire to see the day of the (heavenly) Son of man, but reminds them that he (as the earthly Son of man) must first suffer many



things and be rejected by the current generation. He hopes that the (heavenly) Son of man will find faith when he comes (18:8). But as Jesus draws near to Jericho, the figure in his mind is once again the earthly, suffering Son of man (18:31-34). Here he reiterates the teaching about what he must suffer, in greater detail than before. He feels it is to accomplish that written of the Son of man by the prophets. At the conclusion of the Zaccheus story, just before the triumphal entry, his thoughts are still on the earthly figure: "The Son of man came to seek and save the lost" (19:10).

The parables Jesus tells on this long journey to Jerusalem do not yield much direct insight into his divine consciousness. Rather, they reveal his own insight into the nature of men and the nature of the Father. The parable of the prodigal son is the best illustration of this. These insights could be the thoughts of an extremely acute religious human mind, or they could be the utterances of a divine person who was understood (and recorded) only dimly. One's answer will depend largely upon his religious pre-suppositions.

Luke's account of the triumphal entry is the same (for our purposes) as that of Matthew and Mark, with these three additions: (1) Jesus' followers say "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord"; (2) the Pharisees tell him to rebuke them, but he seems to accept the accolade by his reply "if these were silent, the very stones would cry out"; (3) he says of Jerusalem "you did not know the time of your visitation." The third gospel's account of Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem, particularly his teaching, has already been dealt with.<sup>1</sup>

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1 - see above, pp. 23-25, 34.





Luke's account of the Lord's Supper, which has some variations from that of the first and second gospels, throws a few rays of additional light on Jesus' divine consciousness. The most significant one is this: in 22:37 he says "this scripture must be fulfilled in me" and goes on to quote Isaiah 53:12 ("and he was reckoned with transgressors"). Here is one of the few direct tieups in the passion narrative between the mind of Jesus and the Suffering Servant of Second Isaiah, particularly chapter 53. Many scholars feel this concept dominated Jesus' self-consciousness, but direct links have not been as numerous as many would have liked. Here is one of them.

The other item peculiar to Luke's Last Supper and relevant to our study is Jesus' statement, in the discourses that followed the meal, that

"as my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."<sup>1</sup>

This illustrates how Jesus (or Luke) held the two concepts of the Son of man in juxtaposition right until the end.

The scene in Gethsemane is the same in Luke as in the other synoptics, but here the agony is more vivid: "his sweat became like great drops of blood falling upon the ground" (22:44). Jesus' reply to the questions of Pilate and the high priest are very similar to his answer in Matthew: "You say that I am" (Matthew: "You have said so"). Luke alone records that Jesus was also taken before Herod, but made no reply to him.

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1 - Luke 22:29,30.



As we have seen, Luke's passion narrative is in essential agreement with Mark and Matthew. However, when we come to the crucifixion itself we find a vast difference in the account of Jesus on the cross -- at least in the words he uttered. There is no cry of dereliction in Luke. Instead, there are three victorious utterances: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" to the crucifiers; "today you will be with me in Paradise" to the dying criminal; and "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!" (23:34,43,46). Here we need no explanation of a poignant and haunting cry, because we have one who died in complete trust of God's purpose and power over death, who asked forgiveness of his murderers, and who felt he would be in Paradise when death took him from this life. This awareness, though singularly documented, seems more consistent with the self-consciousness Jesus expressed throughout his life and ministry.

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## 5. John

If we were to delete the word "emergence" from our thesis title, we would be tempted to go on and make the bold statement that John is primarily a treatise on our very subject. For in this gospel we do not have to look far for evidence of Jesus' divine consciousness; it is a theme which flavours almost every discourse of Jesus, and permeates the entire work.

This fact illustrates only one of the differences between John and the synoptics in content, structure and style. The chronological outline of the synoptic gospels is not that of the Fourth Gospel, and it is less important in John. Most of what is relevant to our subject in this gospel comes in the discourses and the general attitude of Jesus. Thus we will not perform a step-by-step comparison with what we have said concerning the three other gospels, although at certain points we will compare differences in emphasis and teaching.

Our interpretation of John, even at the strictly literary level, has been guided by the principle suggested by C.H. Dodd: that the fourth evangelist seeks and expresses in each particular incident the meaning of the whole.<sup>1</sup> This explains why we have no emergence of divine consciousness in Jesus in this gospel, but rather a Person who was in the beginning, who was with God, who was God, and through whom all things were made (1:1-3) -- a Person who at the very outset of his ministry knew his heavenly role (1:50,51), and that his earthly work would be accomplished at a particular "hour" (2:4).

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1 - Dodd, C.H., The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 445.



That John does not go about the same way as the synoptic gospels in establishing Jesus' divine consciousness is apparent, not only from the beginning of the fourth gospel, but also from where it makes its early departure from the synoptic framework of significant and relevant events. Case in point: the first such event, the baptism of Jesus, is omitted in John. It is replaced by John the Baptist testifying he saw the Spirit descending on Jesus. Also, the Baptist denies he is Elijah, although he feels he is the one Isaiah told of who would prepare the way of the Lord (1:21,23).

The first recorded statements of Jesus in the fourth gospel are very terse. He spoke only twenty-two words in his first four utterances.<sup>1</sup> We get the impression of an extremely powerful, self-confident, authoritative figure.

In the first chapter alone, as an anticipation of what is to come and as an immediate testimony to his uniqueness, Jesus is acclaimed by six titles: Word, Lamb of God, Rabbi, Messiah, Son of God and King of Israel. But it is extremely significant that the first time he uses a title to describe himself, it is the same one he chooses in the synoptics: Son of man (1:51). Some commentators, in formulating a Johannine Christology, have overlooked the fact that even in this gospel it is Jesus' favourite title for himself (he uses it at least ten other times<sup>2</sup>). He employs the figures of both heavenly and earthly Son of man, but with less distinction than in the synoptics: where he seems to refer to himself as earthly Son of man, the idea of the heavenly personage never seems to be far from his mind. Certainly there is little, if any,

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1 - John 1:38,39,42,43.

2 - John 3:13,14; 5:27; 6:27,53,62; 8:28; 9:35; 12:23,34; 13:31.





emphasis in Jesus' teaching on the suffering Son of man, and perhaps this is why scholars have missed its regular usage in John. We also note from the references that Jesus' use of the term occurs largely in the events prior to the Farewell Discourses and Passion narrative. This is not particularly significant, however, because in this same block he does not use any title of himself (except "Son" a few times), preferring simply the first person pronouns "I" or "me."

What Jesus' consciousness of himself as Son of man involved is perhaps most fully expressed in 3:13-15:

"No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life."

Here Jesus uses the term to describe a metaphysical figure who has had traffic with heaven, and actually came from there. Yet this is the same Son of man who must fulfill an earthly role and die on a cross. This death will effect an almost supernatural change in the lives of some human beings: it will give them the quality of eternity. As we will come to see, the death of the Son of man is not seen so much as suffering, but rather as a glorification of the Father (and Son).

Jesus' sense of being one who came from heaven or from "above" finds ample expression in this gospel.<sup>1</sup> This supernatural self-consciousness is usually expressed in relation to the Father, and thrice it is expressed in terms of time, i.e., that he was in heaven "before" he came to earth (6:62, 8:58, 17:5). These passages all expand the assertion of the Prologue that Jesus was in the beginning with God, then came into the world and dwelt among us.

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1 - John 6:38,51,62; 8:23; 14:2; 16:28; 17:5.



The two other names Jesus uses directly to describe himself have affinities with the Son of man term described above. They are "Son" and "Son of God." The former, which is usually preceded by "the" or "thy," is used in 5:19 ff., 6:40, 17:1 and (if it be considered a continuation of the quotation) 3:16-21. Jesus calls himself "Son of God" in 5:25, 10:36, and 11:4; in 19:7 the mob confirms that he used it in his speech. Jesus accepts, either implicitly or explicitly, the titles "Christ" (4:26, 10:24), and "Teacher and Lord" (13:13).

Nevertheless, we see that the dominant idea in his divine self-consciousness in John is that of Sonship. This follows not only from the use of the word "Son" in the three main titles he uses of himself (not counting the "I am's," which are more illustrative), but also -- we might even say especially -- in his continual use of the word "Father" for God throughout the gospel. What is even more significant is that Jesus' regular use of the definite article with any of the "Son" terms indicates his sense of unique Sonship. This is confirmed when we remember he not only saw his Sonship as personal and subjective, but also as heavenly and supernatural.

Jesus' expression of his sense of Sonship was not limited to use of the terms "Father" and "Son" for God and himself; it is seen in numerous passages outlining his relationship with the Father.<sup>1</sup> He has a definite conviction of being "sent" by the Father.<sup>2</sup> He feels the Father has given him judgement, the power to grant life, and works to accomplish (5:19 ff.). He asserts that his teaching is from the Father (7:17), and that only the Son has seen (6:46) and knows (8:55) the Father.

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1 - John 5:19; 6:46; 7:17; 8:55; 10:30,38; 14:6,9,28; 16:28.

2 - John 4:34; 5:36; 6:29; 7:28; 8:42; 9:4; 10:36; etc.





He says "he who has seen me has seen the Father" (14:9), and declares that no one comes to the Father but by him (14:6). He is conscious of a sense of mutual indwelling between himself and the Father,<sup>1</sup> which at one point results in his claiming "I and the Father are one" (10:30). It was assertions like this that enraged the Jews and brought Jesus to his death. However, it was more characteristic of Jesus -- even the Johannine Jesus -- to maintain his subordination to God (5:19,30; 14:28). The figure of the Vine in 15:1-11 also expresses Jesus' subordination to God, although that is not its central message.

As we have already noted, the "I am" statements of Jesus are not meant to be definitive Christological assertions, but metaphorical illustrations of his relationship to the world. In these passages Jesus says he is the bread of life, the light of the world, the door of the sheep, the good shepherd, the resurrection and the life, the way, the truth and the life, and the true vine.<sup>2</sup>

The fourth evangelist on at least two occasions used a very subtle method to reveal Jesus' divine consciousness: he reports something Jesus said or did, which at a surface reading has little bearing on his self-consciousness, then has someone, usually a disciple, look back later, associate the saying or event with a verse of Scripture, and realize Jesus was referring to his sense of mission. This occurs in Jesus' pronouncement about raising the temple in three days (2:18-22) and in the account of the triumphal entry (12:16).

John, however, does not record as <sup>many</sup> passages as the synoptics portraying Jesus as deriving (or confirming) his messianic consciousness

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1 - John 10:38; 14:10,20; 17:21,23.

2 - John 6:35; 8:12; 10:7,11; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1.





from the scriptures. There are definite instances in the fourth gospel in which Jesus does view scripture as attesting to him,<sup>1</sup> but on the other hand John attributes to Jesus a greater clairvoyance than any of the synoptics do.<sup>2</sup>

The Johannine Jesus is very certain of his role from the beginning (unlike the synoptic Jesus, whose concept of his work seems to change from his original preaching). We have seen how at the wedding in Cana, the first "sign" of his ministry, he said "My hour has not yet come" (2:4), and that he described his function as Son of man in his first recorded teaching of any length (3:13-15). This sense of purpose did not undergo any real change, although it was expressed in different ways.

He talked of his "hour" at various points,<sup>3</sup> referring to his crucifixion, which was his glorification. As we have already seen, he had a strong consciousness of being "sent." There was an equally-powerful sense of having to go away,<sup>4</sup> and another of being seen again by the disciples after the crisis was over (14:19, 16:16). He realized that the accomplishment of his work involved his death (6:51, 19:30), and yet maintained, as ever, that he was the complete master of his fate and that no one takes his life (he gives it of his own free will). Not only this, but he has the power to take it again (10:18). He says he has been "consecrated" by the Father and sent into the world to do his work (10:36).

Jesus' sense of complete control of his destiny and his fearless attitude towards death are also seen in two passages that appear to repudiate the synoptic account of his anguish in Gethsemane,

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1 - John 5:39,46; 15:25; 17:12; 19:28.

2 - John 1:48; 4:21; 13:19.

3 - John 2:4; 7:6; 12:23; 17:1.

4 - John 7:32; 8:21; 10:17; 12:8,32; 13:1,33; 16:5,10,28.



even to the very words the synoptists used. In 12:27 Jesus says:

"And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'?  
No, for this purpose I have come to this hour."

At his arrest he says to Peter (18:11): "Put your sword into its sheath; shall I not drink the cup which the Father has given me?" Yet John is also concerned with making Jesus a human being; to this end he portrays him thirsting (4:6) and weeping (11:35).

Another major insight into Jesus' divine consciousness emerges from his teaching concerning the coming of the Counselor.<sup>1</sup> Here Jesus reveals his awareness not only of his own divine person and function, but also of God's plan for the future, including the Being God will use to continue his work. It is interesting to note that in the first two passages listed (see footnote) ~~it~~ is God who will send the Counselor; in the other two Jesus says he will.

John's account of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus each give a glimpse into the mind of Jesus which is not found in the synoptics. In reply to Pilate Jesus says "My kingdom is not of this world" (18:36). However, this does not have to mean Jesus conceived of himself as a king in any sense, because his answer was in terms of the charge brought against him: that he claimed to be king of the Jews.

The item from the crucifixion is of greater importance. From the cross Jesus uttered three sayings, none of which are recorded in the other gospels. The first two are not relevant here, but the third is: the statement "It is finished" just as he died (19:30). Here we have the Greek word *τετέλεσται*, from the verb *τελέω*, which can be translated "finished" (as in KJV, RSV), but also "accomplished" (NEB).

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1 - John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7.





Arndt and Gingrich list three meanings for the verb, in this order:

(1) complete, finish, bring to an end; (2) accomplish, perform, fulfil; (3) pay.<sup>1</sup> However, Liddell and Scott's classical lexicon puts the meanings in this order: (1) complete, fulfil, accomplish; (2) make perfect; (3) finish.<sup>2</sup> Thus there is a strong possibility, particularly if the fourth evangelist was reverting to a more classical usage, that Jesus is here portrayed, at the moment of death, as viewing his work completed and fulfilled in the manner he had understood throughout his lifetime.

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1 - Arndt, W.F., and Gingrich, F.W., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952 (fourth edition), p. 818.

2 - Liddell and Scott, Greek-English Lexicon (abridged). Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1953, p. 696.



## 6. Conclusion

The first and possibly most significant conclusion we derive from a literary study of the gospels is the importance of the title "Son of man." This is the only name by which Jesus calls himself (with very rare exceptions) in the synoptic gospels, and it remains his favourite term for himself in the gospel of John. Although he seemed to accept the titles "Christ," "Lord," "Teacher," "Son of God," "Son of David," and others, this was the one he usually used even after allowing one of the others. We grapple with the full significance of the term to the historic Jesus in Part III. In John, however, we do find Jesus calling himself "Son of God;" hence, from a literary point of view, the Church is justified in employing this term to describe its Lord.

As we have noted, human and super-human elements in Jesus' thinking are seen side by side in the synoptics, particularly Mark. Sometimes, as in the parables (especially those of Luke), we see an awareness of divine truths which are not necessarily those of a divine being come to earth, but possibly those of a human being of extraordinary religious insight. Nevertheless, in other places, we see in Jesus a self-consciousness that transcends the greatest human religious thought: he forgives sins, he talks of "him who sent me," he says he is lord of the sabbath, he says he must suffer and die and be raised again to fulfil the scriptures.

In John, we do not have this juxtaposition. Jesus' self-awareness continually transcends the human, and we get the definite impression that this is a divine being come to earth temporarily directly from the Father's abode. True, there are a few instances in John which display the humanity of Jesus, but they are the expressions of human needs



or emotions (thirsting and weeping) and have little direct bearing on his self-consciousness. Their function seems to be to present the fact of a human reality present in Jesus.

The fourth gospel also admits of no change in Jesus' understanding of himself and his role. He is as sure of it at the beginning of his ministry as he is at the moment of death. He is the Father's Son who has come to earth to die so that the Father might be glorified and men might have eternal life. No one takes his life; he gives it. There are no doubts and no withdrawals to think things over.

The synoptics, however, seem to show some development in Jesus' self-consciousness: in terms of our title, an emergence. His earliest preaching indicates he saw himself as a herald of the kingdom of God, in the manner of John the Baptist, whose influence upon him was significant. However, as the ministry unfolds, it is not long before there are hints that he began to see his task as something more unique and terrible: in the bridegroom metaphor, he felt he would be taken away from his disciples. This consciousness ripened into the teaching, first fully expressed at Caesarea Philippi, that he must suffer and die and be raised again. Jesus seemed to draw this teaching from the scriptures, particularly in the Passion narratives. Thus we conclude that his self-consciousness was developed and expressed in the framework of the religious tradition of his people, though we are not entitled to conclude that the efficacy of his coming and his death was limited to them.

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## PART II -- EXEGETICAL STUDY

### 1. The Primitive Kerygma

Certain passages in the early chapters of Acts, notably four sermons of Peter and one of Paul, are believed to contain the earliest material in the New Testament. The theory is that they embody the essential features of the earliest preaching of the Jerusalem Christians proclaimed in the weeks and months immediately following the death and resurrection of Jesus.

The import and content of this "Jerusalem kerygma" (and the closely-related "Pauline kerygma") was brought to the world's attention by C.H. Dodd's significant book The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments. In this section my interest is with Dodd's concept of the kerygma, for I find that the German theological symposiums which have been debating myth, kerygma and history<sup>1</sup> in the wake of Bultmann's "de-mythologizing of the gospel" have used kerygma in a different sense: apparently meaning the whole gospel message. For example, one of the symposium editors refers to the "Johannine kerygma."<sup>2</sup> This is not to reject the German usage; it is only that my particular interest is in those primitive passages which Dodd calls the kerygma, or apostolic preaching.

The kerygma is important for our consideration because it is generally seen as the earliest literary link with the historical Jesus.

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- 1 - Kerygma and Myth, ed. H.W. Bartsch. London: S.P.C.K., 1953.  
Kerygma and History, ed. C.E. Braaten and R.A. Harrisville. New York: Abingdon Press, 1962.
- 2 - Braaten, C.E., Kerygma and History, "A Critical Introduction," p. 20.



J.M. Robinson analyzes the new quest of the historical Jesus going on among New Testament scholars and concludes the big question concerning its historical validity is this: does the kerygma have some recognizable continuity with the preaching of the historical Jesus? Is the exalted Lord in continuity with Jesus of Nazareth?<sup>1</sup> He says the new quest is possible through a new understanding of history and self: history understood through historical personal encounter. Robinson seems to take up Bultmann's existential tack at this point, and maintains we can glimpse the historicity of Jesus by encountering him in the kerygma. This is a lofty concept, but I am unable to see how it works in actual practice, and my perplexity is well expressed by one of the Continental scholars, who says of Robinson's book:

"...it proposes that the new quest has to its advantage a new concept of history, but how this new concept helps the historian discover or establish historical facts, or solve a strictly historical problem, e.g. the messianic self-consciousness of Jesus, we are never told."<sup>2</sup>

What is more important for our purposes, however, is the fact that Robinson lines up with Dodd against Bultmann and the German school in affirming that we can get "behind" the kerygma to understand something of the historical Jesus, although he insists he is interested in a different kind of historicity than that which Dodd seeks. Moreover, according to Robinson, Bultmann's position has modified slightly on this matter, and he and some of his disciples now admit that we might infer some things about the historical Jesus and his messianic consciousness from certain words and actions. However, the Bultmann school has little interest in this line of investigation.

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1 - Robinson, J.M., A New Quest of the Historical Jesus. London: SCM Press, 1959, p. 13.

2 - Braaten, C.E., op. cit., p. 17.





The two most significant and positive contributions of Dodd's work on the kerygma are his culling of the early apostolic preaching out of the New Testament literature and his demonstration of its closeness to the very fountainhead of the gospel tradition. A less-widely accepted conclusion, but one which I feel is valid and find helpful for this thesis, is his assertion that Mark's gospel bears most of the elements of this kerygma, and that it might even be thought of as an exposition of the "historical" section of the kerygma.

From five primitive sermons in Acts 2-4, 10 and 13, Dodd has isolated six basic elements in the earliest preaching of the Aramaic-speaking church at Jerusalem: (1) the age of fulfillment has dawned; (2) this has taken place through the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus; (3) by virtue of his resurrection Jesus is exalted at the right hand of God; (4) the Holy Spirit in the Church is the sign of Christ's present power and glory; (5) the messianic age will shortly reach its culmination in Christ; (6) the sermons usually close with an appeal for repentance, and a promise of the Holy Spirit and hence salvation.<sup>1</sup>

The basis for considering these sermons so genuine and so early is that Dodd and other British scholars have found stylistic and grammatical evidence of Aramaisms in them, which stand out in contrast to Luke's smooth Greek style. These passages usually read more smoothly when they are translated back into Aramaic, hence the conclusion that Luke took this tradition as it stood from the very primitive Aramaic-speaking church at Jerusalem. This puts these passages very close to the historic Jesus.

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1 - Dodd, C.H., The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments, pp. 38-43.



Dodd maintains it is possible to view Mark as an expanded form of the historical section of the kerygma. He points to Mark's superscription (Mark 1:1) as characteristically kerygmatic, in which "gospel" is a virtual equivalent for "kerygma." Mark 1:2 (As it is written in Isaiah the prophet") recalls the first words of the kerygmatic sermon in Acts 2: "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel." Here we have the theme of fulfillment -- the first characteristic of the apostolic preaching. Indeed, one has to admit Dodd's claim that the first 15 verses of Mark are remarkably similar to the kerygmatic preaching of both Acts and Paul. Dodd concludes: "Mark therefore conceived himself as writing a form of kerygma, and...his Gospel is in fact a rendering of the apostolic preaching...."<sup>1</sup>

Matthew and Luke contain more didache than Mark, and proportionately smaller accounts of the Passion, but show their kerygmatic tendency by, among other things, their inclusion of Christ's geneology. Matthew also works extra hard to show Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament expectation. Dodd expresses the relationship between the kerygma and the gospels in this way:

"We are not to think of the record in the Gospels as the ultimate raw material, out of which the Preaching was constructed. The kerygma is primary, and it acted as a preservative of the tradition which conveyed the facts. The nearer we are in the Gospels to the stuff of the kerygma, the nearer we are to the fountain head of the tradition."<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to note that an Interpreter's Bible commentator, in essentially agreeing with Dodd in his treatment of the kerygma, includes Jesus' self-consciousness as part of the historicity it (the kerygma) reflects:

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<sup>1</sup> - Ibid., p. 105.

<sup>2</sup> - Ibid., p. 127.





"The influence of his personality upon them during his ministry, his own self-consciousness communicated to them,...interpreted in the light of the resurrection experience and the illumination of the Spirit--have taken root....The other affirmations (of the kerygma) are vitally related to his own teaching and consciousness of his mission."<sup>1</sup>

In my opinion, the relationship suggested between the kerygma and the gospel records, even if it is granted, is not as helpful as at first appears because of its general nature. Almost without exception, the words and actions from which we hope to make inferences about the self-consciousness of Jesus are not included in the kerygmatic preaching as it has been passed down to us. This is not damaging, though, because we could not expect these words and actions to be handed down; this is not the nature of the kerygma.

The value of the isolation of the kerygma, its early dating, and its proposed relationship to the Gospel, for our topic, seems to me to be this: we can put more confidence in the portions of the gospel story that keep close to the form and content of the kerygma. Mark especially seems to be strengthened here. For instance, from the first element of the kerygma, we seem safe in concluding that Jesus must have expressed some sense of consciousness that he was called of God to a special divine task, in which he was fulfilling certain Hebrew religious expectations (even if it was his own peculiar interpretation of such expectations). We should note, however, that twice the primitive preaching seems to indicate Jesus was made Christ at his resurrection or exaltation (Acts 2:36; 5:31).

From the second characteristic of the kerygmatic preaching we can conclude that Jesus saw his ministry and death as a working out of

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1 - Strachan, R.H., The Interpreter's Bible, vol. 7; "The Gospel in the New Testament, p. 5.





this fulfillment. He apparently emphasized his death so much that his followers took it and the resurrection-experience as the central point in their early preaching. These two elements of the kerygma provide significant insights into Jesus' self-consciousness.

But, as we have already indicated, it is a difficult step to move from acceptance of these major teachings, which certainly give us a general view of Jesus' self-consciousness (at least on these two points) to the acceptance of the details (actions, teachings) which give body to the gospel story, and which we hope may show the emergence of this divine awareness. However, it does not have to be an impossible step, and where the gospels agree with the kerygma in its basic outline there is a greater likelihood that the details have also been passed on with a high degree of historical fidelity.

Thus, an intermediate step would seem to be to establish a framework of the basic events of the gospel narrative. Some have said such an outline is impossible, and as far as individual pericopes or paradigms (independent units in the tradition) are concerned, they are right. But I think it has been demonstrated, notably by Dodd,<sup>1</sup> that the Markan narrative may be seen as essentially trustworthy so far as the major events are concerned: the baptism, the Galilean ministry, the withdrawal to Tyre and Sidon, the journey to Jerusalem, and the Passion narrative. Dodd argues that the early preaching included a summary of the historical life of Jesus, that in Acts 10 and 13 we have a "summary of summaries" of it, and that Mark's chronological outline of major events remains essentially in agreement with it.

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1 - Dodd, C.H., op. cit., p. 105. Also: New Testament Studies; Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1953, pp. 1-11. Cf. Taylor, V., The Life and Ministry of Jesus; London: The Macmillan Company, 1961, p. 39.



Thus we will concentrate our critical-exegetical study of the gospel narrative on the major events of the Markan outline: those listed above (p. 62), plus Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration, which are included in all three synoptics in remarkably similar form, and which seem to lie at or near the source of the earliest tradition. It is to these events that we now turn.

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## 2. The Baptism of Jesus

The baptism of Jesus was an historical event. Not only is it mentioned in two very early speeches of Peter (Acts 1:22, 10:37), but it is inconceivable that any gospel writer would have created an event that caused the early Christians such embarrassment after the problem had already come to light. Matthew is the best case in point. By the time he has come to write his gospel, the problem of Jesus having been baptized into "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" (Mk. 1:4) had been raised, and he seems to try to overcome it by this note in the narrative:

"John would have prevented him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now; for thus it is fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.'"<sup>1</sup>

There is one possible rebuttal to this argument for historicity: that the event was so well-established in the tradition about Jesus, and in actual primitive practice, that Matthew preferred to explain it rather than withdraw (or omit) it from the narrative, as the fourth evangelist does. This counter-argument seems to me to carry more weight than most commentators have realized (if they have realized it at all), but not enough to topple the affirmative position.

The fact of Jesus' baptism does not, however, establish the historicity of his baptismal vision in the way it is reported. All we can say for certain is that at his baptism Jesus had a tremendous spiritual experience which caused his followers to view the event as the beginning of his sense of mission, or at least of a great new spiritual phase in his life.

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1 - Mt. 3:14,15.



As far as our study is concerned, two questions present themselves: why did Jesus want to submit himself to John's baptism, and what spiritual awareness did he receive from it? There was a note in John's preaching that struck a responsive chord in the religious outlook of our Lord, for the bare fact is that Jesus travelled seventy miles (from Nazareth to east of the southern part of the Jordan) to hear him and be baptized by him. This was not a mere functional event "to fulfil all righteousness" because John's stamp is seen in Jesus' early preaching. From what was to transpire later in the life and teaching of Jesus, one feels ~~it~~ was the prophetic, ethical and eschatological nature of John's preaching that attracted Jesus. But why baptism at the hands of John?

Several suggestions have been advanced. Middleton Murray: Jesus felt himself to be a sinner like everyone else.<sup>1</sup> James MacKinnon: to take a "moral tonic."<sup>1</sup> T.H. Robinson (from Josephus' view of John the Baptist): he came as one already righteous.<sup>1</sup> B.H. Branscomb: humility.<sup>2</sup> Oscar Cullman: he gave himself to an eschatological perspective.<sup>3</sup> However, in my opinion the most suitable hypotheses come from Vincent Taylor and William Barclay, and possibly J.W. Bowman. Both Taylor and Barclay point out that neither at the baptism nor anywhere else in the gospel narrative did Jesus manifest any sense of personal sin. His statement "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone" (Mk. 10:18) should be seen as an expression of humility and not a confession of sin. Both scholars reach the same conclusion: Jesus submitted to John's baptism because he shared a sense of oneness with sinful men, and this was a deliberate act of self-identification with them.<sup>4</sup> They also feel Jesus

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1 - Bowman, J.W., The Intention of Jesus. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1943, p. 10.

2 - Branscomb, B.H., The Gospel of Mark (The Moffatt New Testament Commentary). London: Hodder and Stoughton Ltd., 1937, p. 17.

3 - Cullman, O., The Christology of the New Testament. London: SCM Press Ltd., 1959, p. 43.

4 - Barclay, W., op. cit., pp. 31,32. Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 50.





may have seen the rite as an act of self-dedication to God.

Bowman's hypothesis is a development of this latter possibility. He contends Jesus thought of his submission to John's baptism as a turning of the mind and will away from self and the world, to God, in a response to the prophetic voice of the Baptist. He bases his entire argument on his contention that the English translation "repent" or "repentance" (Mk. 1:4), which is the prophetic imperative, always comes -- via the Greek *μετάνοια* -- from the Hebrew verb *שׁוּב*, which means to turn, to turn back, to return, and not from the Hebrew verb *אָפַן*, which means to be sorry. However, Bowman's argument seems to me to be very precarious: even if one grants his contention stated above, the fact remains that the dominant meaning of *שׁוּב* is to turn in the sense of return or turn back,<sup>1</sup> and this implies that Jesus had turned away from God.

What spiritual awareness did Jesus receive from his baptism? Any answer to this question will have great difficulty rising above the category of conjecture. The problem we face here is similar to that we face in the interpretation of many "supernatural" events recorded in the gospels. It is generally agreed that the gospels are "interpretative history," and that most events therein have an historical kernel and an interpretive or "heightened" element. The problem is: how much of each does a particular event have, and what are the criteria for judging? And then there is always the possibility that in some cases either one of the elements is completely absent, i.e. the event is pure fact or pure fiction.

Scholarship has treated this event rather strangely. Most

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1 - Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, ed. by Brown, Driver and Briggs. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1959, p. 996. Cf. Langenscheidt's Hebrew-English Dictionary To The Old Testament. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 11th edition, 1959, p. 343.





commentators launch into a detailed discussion of the words of the heavenly voice: "Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased" (Mk. 1:11), bringing out the meanings of Ps. 2:7 and Isa. 42:1 (the passages from which the statement is derived), and applying them to Jesus' self-consciousness in elaborate theories concerning the birth of his sense of mission. The strange thing is, however, that most of the exegetes say or imply that they do not view the words from heaven as an utterance to be taken literally, but impute it to the early tradition or the evangelist. Thus they reject the source of their own formulation.

If we do accept the voice and the words as historical fact, or as true to the essence of what Jesus felt (which is what some of the commentators may have in mind, but is a very tenuous and esoteric position), then we are justified in formulating Jesus' sense of mission on the basis of Ps. 2:7 and Isa. 42:1.

From a surface reading of the event, one could conclude it marked the birth of Jesus' filial consciousness. Taylor is one who takes this view:

"The essence of his baptismal experience is the authentication of his filial consciousness....Jesus<sub>1</sub> was conscious of being the Son of God in a unique sense."<sup>1</sup>

James Moffatt says the sense of Sonship Jesus experienced at his baptism was the basis of his later messianic consciousness.<sup>2</sup> Other scholars insist the messianic consciousness is given to Jesus at baptism because of the words used: they closely resemble, though they do not directly quote,<sup>3</sup> phrases from Ps. 2:7, a messianic psalm, and Isa. 42:1, one of

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1 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 51.

2 - Moffatt, J., Love in the New Testament, p. 76 (quoted in Andrews, E., The Meaning of Christ for Paul. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949, p. 226).

3 - Taylor, V., The Gospel According to St. Mark. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1953, p. 162.



the Servant-poems. Thus some feel Jesus became conscious that he was to have a messianic role, and that it involved suffering and the way of the cross.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, men like F.C. Grant look at the same utterance and say neither Ps. 2:7 nor Isa. 42:1 are necessarily messianic, but have been made so by Christians. Grant goes on to assess the baptism in these words:

"...for Mark the emphasis does not lie upon an inner experience of Jesus himself, to be interpreted biographically, but upon the divine announcement of what--or rather, of who--Jesus already is."<sup>2</sup>

He says there is no suggestion in Mark that Jesus' baptism was the birth of his messianic consciousness. Branscomb takes a similar view:

"The theme of the whole vision is theological, a definition of Jesus' office and a statement of His equipment for His work. It does not represent so much an inner experience of Jesus as what Christians came to think about him."<sup>3</sup>

It is extremely conjectural whether we can get behind the baptismal scene, whatever it was, to the original experience. But if it can be done at all, possibly the way is to look into his early ministry and teaching for clues to the working out of his early self-consciousness. C.J. Cadoux takes such an approach, and uses it to discount the idea that Jesus saw himself in a Suffering Servant role at his baptism. He maintains the teaching and events of his early ministry show Jesus did not anticipate the rejection and martyrdom which he later saw would befall him.<sup>4</sup> He points to the optimism of Jesus' early preaching of repentance, his mission of the twelve, his bitter disappointment at Israel's lack of

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1 - e.g., Bowman, J.W., op. cit., p. 39; Barclay, W., The Gospel of Matthew, vol. I. Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1959, p. 53.

2 - Grant, F.C., The Interpreter's Bible, vol. 7, p. 654.

3 - Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., pp. 19,20.

4 - Cadoux, C.J., The Historic Mission of Jesus. New York: Harper and Brothers, no date, p. 183.





repentance (Mt. 11:20; 23:37; Lk. 19:41), and the fact that he utters a Passion-prophecy only once before Caesarea Philippi (the removal of the bridegroom).

To these points we might add the fact that Jesus talks very little about his Sonship in the early ministry, something we should expect on the basis of the heavenly voice at the baptism. But instead, Jesus seems to see his function as that of a herald of the kingdom of God. Moreover, the two main elements of his proclamation were strikingly similar to the baptism into which he was baptised: forgiveness of sins, and apocalyptic expectation (Mk. 1:15). Finally, there is the evidence of the kerygma, which viewed Jesus' baptism as an anointing with the Holy Spirit and power (Acts 10:38), not the birth of a filial or messianic consciousness.

Thus, if we can at all apprehend the consciousness Jesus received at his baptism, it would seem to be that he must be a proclaimer of the imminent kingdom of God, along the lines of John the Baptist. This included religio-ethical teaching (of the type seen in the sermon on the mount) and the casting out of demons. This possibility gains strength when we turn to the Galilean ministry of our Lord.

It remains first, however, to consider the light which the temptation casts upon Jesus' self-consciousness. The significance of this event, if it is received as historical fact, is to confirm that Jesus has accepted the bestowal of Sonship upon him in the baptism, and will remain loyal to it in spite of temptations (cf. p. 28 above). The fact is, however, that the earliest gospel does not record a dialogue with Satan, and such dialogue in Matthew and Luke sounds suspiciously



like a pious tale created to give content to Mark's terse statement that "he was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan" (1:13).

However, the realism of the nature of the three temptations, and the fact that such a withdrawal was natural after the experience of the baptism (many spiritual giants have had similar "wilderness withdrawals"), gives the narrative a reality which cannot be overlooked. Thus, even though we do not accept the details of the dialogue with Satan, we conclude that the temptation experience solidified Jesus' sensation of being called to a divine mission to Israel.

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### 3. The Galilean Ministry

The pertinent question in this section is: What do the events of the earliest phase of Jesus' ministry reveal about his concept of his relationship to the kingdom of God? The kingdom of God concept must be the frame of reference for discussion of Jesus' divine consciousness here because it (the kingdom) is the dominating idea in Jesus' early preaching.

There seemsto be enough genuine material for this phase of Jesus' life to allow us to feel we have some authentic glimpses into his own thought. By "this phase" we mean the events from Jesus' first preaching to just before the withdrawal to the region of Tyre and Sidon (Mk. 1:14-7:23 and para.). Three facts inspire this confidence: (1) the stories in this phase are passed on with little attempt to build up Jesus as Messiah or Son of God, indicating that they are not doctrinally-motivated inventions of the early Church; (2) indeed, Jesus is sometimes presented in less than a favourable light, especially in Mark;<sup>1</sup> (3) most of the relevant events in at least two of the synoptics have been recorded with a high degree of verbal similarity, suggesting they are at or near the first stratum of tradition.

Scholars generally have underestimated this phase of Jesus' life in formulating his divine consciousness (particularly its emergence), preferring to glide over it with a few comments in their leap from the baptism to Caesarea Philippi. It is our contention that the events of the early part of the Galilean ministry generally support the hypothesis that he first saw his role as that of a proclaimer of

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1 - Mk. 3:21; 5:31; 6:5.





the kingdom of God. This in turn, it will be seen, supports our feeling that there was a qualitative development in Jesus' divine consciousness during his earthly life.

This is by no means a novel idea. Although they have not treated this section at length concerning Jesus' self-consciousness, most scholars have intimated their preference for this position rather than the one which says Jesus knew his messianic or Sonship or Suffering Servant role at least from the time of his baptism.<sup>1</sup>

Two of the gospels, Matthew and Mark, imply it was the arrest of John that precipitated Jesus' first preaching. Scholars are not agreed as to whether this was what actually happened, and this problem goes right back to the first century. Luke omits the suggestion, possibly due to his Gentile interests, and John takes trouble to show that Jesus and the Baptist carried on concurrent ministries. It is widely suspected, however, that the fourth gospel's treatment of the relationship of Jesus and John was dominated by apologetic motives. The weight of opinion today seems to lie slightly in favour of the affirmative: that John's arrest influenced Jesus' decision to begin preaching. Taylor says "Mark rightly affixes on the arrest of John as the decisive moment for the beginning of the ministry."<sup>2</sup> A.E.J. Rawlinson, however, calls the connection between the two events an "ideal reminiscence" of the evangelist.<sup>3</sup> We side with Taylor, because if it was such an "ideal reminiscence" it would be stroked more definitely into the gospel narrative.

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1 - For: Taylor, Cadoux (C.J.), Cullman, McNeile, Klausner, Goguel.  
Against: Barclay, Bowman.

2 - Taylor, V., *op. cit.*, p. 165.

3 - Rawlinson, A.E.J., The Gospel According to St. Mark. London: Methuen and Company Ltd., 1925, p. 13.



A.H. McNeile, in his fine commentary on Matthew, offers this interesting suggestion: the phrase  $\alpha\pi\omicron\tau\acute{o}\tau\epsilon$  ("from that time") is used twice in Matthew, to begin the section on Jesus' first preaching (4:17), and to begin the teaching at Caesarea Philippi and afterwards that he must suffer (16:21); these divide the teaching of Jesus into two main parts, the public teaching of the imminence of the kingdom of God, and the private teaching concerning the necessity of his suffering as a prelude to the coming of the kingdom.<sup>1</sup> Intriguing as it is, however, this theory seems to put too much weight upon what may be coincidental uses of the phrase.

The decisive factor in the question at hand is rather the marked similarity between the earliest preaching of Jesus and that of John. Scholars are almost unanimously agreed that Mark 1:15 and Matthew 4:17 genuinely summarize the essence of Jesus' early message, even if the exact wording is the formulation of the evangelist. Some scholars have pointed out that "gospel of God" (Mk. 1:14) is a Pauline phrase, but this is simply part of the wording the writer uses to introduce the quotation, and not part of the quotation itself. This is both right and natural, and does not detract from the historicity of the summary itself.

Others have pointed out, with more justification, a difference between the sense of doom in John and the more hopeful element in Jesus. But if preaching is truly the communication of truth through personality, then the inconsistency may be attributed to the differences in the personalities of the two men. In addition, there is the significant fact that the preaching was identical in its basic points: the sense of eschatological imminence, and the need for repentance. It seems

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1 - McNeile, A.H., The Gospel According to St. Matthew. London: Macmillan Co. Ltd., 1961, p. 45.





elementary, but we must again emphasize that Jesus at this point did not give any indication that he was to be the person or agent through which the kingdom was to come, be it through suffering or in any other manner. He simply proclaimed its coming and called men to return to God, and in this respect his self-consciousness reveals no essential difference from that of John.

However, there is evidence that at or near the beginning of his ministry Jesus also saw his role as that of a leader and instructor of a group of men who were to assist in his work. Almost before he did anything else Jesus called four disciples to be with him, and his ministry had not progressed very far before there was a core of twelve men. But there is no basis here for concluding, as Barclay does, that "Jesus never had any doubt that for himself there was a cross at the end of the road."<sup>1</sup> This is a judgement of faith, and a dubious one at that. I believe Taylor is closer to the truth when he says: "The words of Jesus summon Simon and Andrew to become disciples and heralds of the kingdom of God."<sup>2</sup> (My underscoring.) Certainly it was one of the customs in that milieu for a teacher to gather a small band of followers around him, and Jesus is doing nothing extraordinary here.

We learn from the "Q" source material found in Matthew and Luke, and from various summary statements in Mark (e.g. 1:22), that teaching was a very real part of Jesus' ministry. At this point we should distinguish between public<sup>3</sup> religio-ethical teaching of the type found in the sermon on the mount, and the private personal-eschatological teachings to the disciples (as at Caesarea Philippi and the Transfiguration).

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1 - Barclay, W., The Mind of Jesus, p. 68.

2 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 169.

3 - I believe this teaching was public: that Mt. 7:28 and Lk. 6:17 outweigh Mt. 5:1, and that "disciples" is used here in the sense of the crowds who came to hear Jesus, as Lk. 6:17 suggests.



Here we are thinking in terms of the former, and we suggest -- as we did in Part I -- that the general tone and content of the "Q" teaching is that of a highly penetrating and sensitive religious personality, but not necessarily that of a divine being. If the main body of this teaching actually comes from the early part of Jesus' ministry, as it appears to, it supports our thesis that Jesus did not see himself as much more than a religious teacher and herald at this time. Additional evidence comes in Jesus' assertions "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mk. 2:17 and para.) and "that is why I came out" (i.e., to preach, Mk. 1:38, Lk. 4:43), and in his parables of the kingdom (Mk. 4 and para.).

It is difficult to estimate the value of the other major element in Jesus' early ministry -- healing -- to our investigation. That Jesus effected some miraculous cures among the people of Galilee there can be little doubt. The witness of the evil spirits was that Jesus was the Son of God, but he did not use the title of himself, and the disciples continued to call him "Teacher" and "Master". Mark 1:25 records that Jesus rebuked an unclean spirit, and Taylor comments:

"The command implies that Jesus shared the belief in daemon-possession so characteristic of the age. Accommodation to the ideas of the possessed for curative reasons is nowhere indicated or suggested."<sup>1</sup>

It is almost as though he (Taylor) were taking dead aim at Barclay, who feels that Jesus would have had to assume outwardly this belief for curative purposes.<sup>2</sup> Barclay, however, thinks Jesus actually did believe in demon-possession. One fact which tends to support our hypothesis is that the vast majority of Jesus' healings occurred during

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1 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 175.

2 - Barclay, W., op. cit., p. 81.





this early period, and that they faded in significance as his view of his role changed and he pressed towards Jerusalem.

An important "Q" passage (Mt. 11:2-6; Lk. 7:18-23) reminds us that we cannot categorically exclude healing from significance in Jesus' developing divine consciousness, especially in his messianic awareness. When the Baptist's disciples ask him if he is "the one who is to come" he cites his healing miracles and implies that they are not far wrong. What this passage really says, however, is that Jesus felt his miraculous powers were a sign of his religious identity; it does not say that healing must occupy an integral place in his "final" understanding of his mission. The fact is that Jesus performed fewer miracles in the closing stages of his ministry. We might also note that at the time of the questioning by John's disciples, Jesus was still in his Galilean ministry: the withdrawal to Tyre and the event at Caesarea Philippi had not yet occurred.

There is, however, evidence from this phase of Jesus' ministry which indicates he was conscious of a more unique calling, that not only his work but his person was vitally involved with the eschatological expectation of the day. Three of the most significant utterances occur in the cluster of "opposition stories" which Mark records in 2:1-3:6, and which have parallels in both other synoptics. These are: "My son, your sins are forgiven" (2:5); "The days will come, when the bridegroom is taken away from them" (2:20); and, "the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath" (2:28).

In 2:5, the word translated "forgive" is from the Greek ἀφίημι, which means to remit or set aside.<sup>1</sup> The tense used here is the aoristic

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1 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 195.





present (punctiliar), which carries the sense "are this moment forgiven." Thus there is little doubt this was an authoritative declaration. The point here, as we noted in Part I, is that no mere herald has the authority to do this. This is exactly what the scribes think, and Jesus avows that "the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (Mk. 2:10 and para.). At this point our problem is compounded because this is the first use of the term "Son of man" by Jesus, and, in Mark at least, it is used only one other time before Caesarea Philippi -- in the same cycle of opposition stories (Mk. 2:28).

Scholars have long been aware of this problem, and several attempts have been made to solve it. Most commentators have rejected Wellhausen's solution, that "Son of man" is the mis-translation of the Aramaic "man" or "mankind." It would mean that man has authority to represent mankind and forgive a fellow man, and scholars find little or no justification for this in Jesus' thought or Jewish tradition.

Another suggested solution has been that verses 5-10 in Mark 2 are an insertion, either by Mark or his source, because the narrative runs smoothly without them, and they contain views of Christ which belong to the theology of the early Church.<sup>1</sup> However, what makes this idea unconvincing is the fact that "Son of man" was Jesus' title for himself, and if the Church created this saying it would likely have used another term. This was not a favourite name for him among the early Christians. Also, the fact that forgiving sins was not seen as a messianic function<sup>2</sup> seems to weaken the idea that the insertion was made to strengthen the Church's Christological presuppositions, which included Jesus as Messiah.

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1 - Rawlinson, p. 24; Branscomb, p. 44; Grant, p. 668. Against this view: Creed, J.M., The Gospel According to St. Luke. London: Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1957, p. 78.

2 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 195; Grant, F.C., op. cit., p. 671.



Jesus' attitude to the sabbath, especially when connected with his view of the importance of the Son of man, make it distinctly possible that his claim, "the Son of man is the lord even of the sabbath," is authentic.

The onus of proof is on those who would reject the historicity of these two early "Son of man" sayings, and we feel the attempt fails. Some scholars also question the authenticity of Jesus' statement about the removal of the bridegroom. Branscomb says:

"The reply attributed to Jesus can scarcely be original. Jesus certainly did not speak openly of His death, nor even privately, until after the close of the Galilean ministry."<sup>1</sup>

This is our point exactly: that Jesus did not speak of his death until Caesarea Philippi, very likely because he did not see it as necessary until that time. However, this does not have to mean the saying is not genuine; it could be simply misplaced chronologically. Taylor, along with Cadoux, feels the incident belongs later in the narrative:

"There is no need to suppose that the story belongs to the earliest days of the Galilean ministry. On the contrary, the fact that the disciples of Jesus are distinguished from those of John and...from the disciples of the Pharisees, suggests a more advanced point, possibly after the execution of the Baptist."<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, there is a good possibility that all three of the utterances referred to belong to a period later in Jesus' ministry, because it is generally agreed that Mark combines a chronological with a topical order in his sequence of events, and this cluster of opposition stories is one of the best examples of the latter. If this be so, our feeling that Jesus' self-consciousness at this stage was limited to that of a herald and teacher is unimpaired; if it is not so,

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1 - Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 53. Cf. Grant, F.C., op. cit., p. 676.  
2 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 208. Cf. Cadoux, C.J., op. cit., p. 191.







we must be prepared to admit at least an expressed anticipation by Jesus of his suffering and death as a primary eschatological event.

Another statement in the early ministry which indicates a degree of self-understanding that transcends the human is Jesus' categorical pronouncement concerning the unforgivable sin (Mk. 3:28-30 and para.). Here Jesus claims to know the judgement of the eternal God: how he will finally treat all sinners. There is disagreement on the authenticity of this passage, even though it is in all synoptics.<sup>1</sup>

A much more perplexing statement, however, is the "Q" passage in which Jesus uncharacteristically (for the synoptics) talks of his relationship to the Father without reference to his (Jesus') work or function (Mt. 11:25-27; Lk. 10:21,22). This affirmation of the mutual knowledge of the Father and the Son is singular in the synoptics, and, as we noted in Part I, the tone and content of this passage have greater affinities with the fourth gospel. J.M. Creed says:

"There is a general tendency among recent editors to hear in these words as they stand echoes of the thought of the early Church about its Lord and his relations with the Father, rather than echoes of actual words of Jesus."<sup>2</sup>

I agree with this tendency, and suggest the passage bears no damaging blow to the position that Jesus felt no uniquely divine consciousness of his person in the early phase of his ministry. I feel Taylor is close to the truth:

"It is far better to recognize during the ministry as well as in youth that 'he grew in wisdom as in age' (Lk. 2:52), and to take seriously the teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews that he 'learned obedience by the things which he suffered' (5:8)."<sup>3</sup>

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1 - For: Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 241; against: Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 74.

2 - Creed, J.M., op. cit., p. 149.

3 - Taylor, V., The Life and Ministry of Jesus, p. 76.



He says Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God indicates this development, because as the gospel narrative proceeds, the coming of the kingdom grows less imminent. Schweitzer<sup>1</sup> and C.J. Cadoux hold similar views. Cadoux, who felt there was a definite difference between Jesus' understanding of himself and his mission in the early and late days of his ministry, argues this way:

"...it does not, of course, necessarily follow that the thought of the Passion could not have occurred to him earlier (i.e., than Caesarea Philippi): it may have done so, and Jesus may for certain reasons have said nothing to his Disciples about it for some time. Yet it is surely more natural, seeing that Caesarea-Philippi evidently constituted an important landmark in the development of his thought and teaching, to suppose that the virtual conviction that he must suffer death had come home to him recently, rather than that he had been silently nursing it throughout the whole earlier period of the Ministry."<sup>2</sup>

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1 - Schweitzer, A., The Quest of the Historical Jesus. London: A. & C. Black, 1910, p. 358.

2 - Cadoux, C.J., op. cit., p. 191.





#### 4. Caesarea Philippi

One of the major focal points -- perhaps the focal point -- in the study of Jesus' self-consciousness is Peter's confession that he is the Christ. According to two of the three synoptic sources, this occurred as Jesus walked with his disciples in the region of the villages of Caesarea Philippi, north of Galilee and in the jurisdiction of Philip the tetrarch rather than of Herod Antipas. This confession and the teaching it inspired in Jesus immediately afterwards is the event we refer to as "Caesarea Philippi." It comes at the central point of Mark's gospel (chapter eight of sixteen chapters), it is the first time Jesus is called "Christ," and it is the beginning of a new teaching and a new ministry for Jesus.

However, it is my feeling that this event should not be considered alone. Rather, it should be treated as the final and climactic part of a trilogy of events which support and help explain each other. The first two events are the death of John the Baptist (i.e., Jesus' hearing about it) and Jesus' withdrawal to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

It is true that scholars have not agreed upon the definitive interpretation of these individual events, particularly the last two, and it follows that the disagreement increases when one is used to help interpret the other. Thus it is unlikely that one may go much beyond intelligent speculation in this area, which is not unreasonable because of the very elusiveness of this whole quest. However, it may be possible in this chapter to formulate a probability that the first two events mentioned help us to interpret the greater event at Caesarea Philippi.





This is a case in which it may be most helpful to start at the middle (i.e., the second of the three events). Mark and Matthew both relate (Mk. 7:24 ff., Mt. 15:21) that Jesus went to the region of Tyre near the end of what is usually referred to as his "Galilean ministry." There are some differences in the two accounts: the disciples are along in Matthew; Matthew doesn't say Jesus wished to go incognito; Matthew adds the words "Son of the living God" to Peter's confession; and, Jesus' acceptance of this statement is more definite in Matthew. Luke doesn't record the episode, likely because of Jesus' harsh statement about the Gentiles; instead he mentions a withdrawal to Bethsaida (Lk. 9:10). Scholars have not solved these differences, but generally conclude that Mark's more simple and primitive account is closer to what actually happened. Most scholars affirm the historicity of this event,<sup>1</sup> arguing, among other things, that the early Church would not invent a story in which Jesus likened the Gentiles to dogs. Since the Gospel went to the Gentiles long before the first gospel was written, I believe this to be a valid argument.

The significance of this withdrawal in Jesus' work and thought must not be under-estimated. I agree with Taylor:

"The withdrawal to the region of Tyre is the essential link between the failure of the Galilean ministry and the account of the decisive day when, in the vicinity of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples the pointed question 'Who do you say that I am?' "<sup>2</sup>

The importance of the event as such an "essential link" lies primarily in Jesus' reason for withdrawing, and secondarily in what he did and said there.

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1 - e.g., Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 130; Klausner, J., op. cit., p. 294.

2 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 133.



Why did Jesus withdraw? Many feel he was fleeing from Herod, and this may be correct. But when one surveys what happened shortly before and after the withdrawal, one finds evidence for another motive: to ponder anew his understanding of his life and work in the light of recent events.

The most important of these recent events was the murder of the Baptist. Matthew specifically attributes the first of four withdrawals<sup>1</sup> by Jesus to his hearing this news. Unfortunately, Mark does not say directly why Jesus withdrew. We note, however, that he places the withdrawal to Tyre and Sidon immediately after a rather bitter clash with the Pharisees (7:1-13). In all three synoptics the withdrawal comes shortly after Herod hears of Jesus' "mission of the twelve" and asks -- along with many of the people -- if this is not John raised from the dead, or some other great prophetic figure. This gossip must have reached Jesus' ears.

We must remember that portions of the gospel narrative have been arranged topically rather than chronologically, but the fact that all gospels agree here, even to the extent of the two events placed between them (i.e., the feeding of the five thousand and the walking on the water), gives us assurance that the withdrawal(s) did in fact follow fairly closely upon Jesus' hearing of John's death.

The death of John the Baptist could help but make a powerful impact upon Jesus. This was the man whose preaching precipitated the first crisis of baptism and temptation in him. This was the man from whom Jesus accepted baptism. This was the man whom Jesus said was first among the prophets, and whom he was later to associate with Elijah.

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1 - Mt. 14:13,23; 15:21,29.







And now he was dead -- murdered because of his proclamation. Then Jesus heard that Herod and others associated him with a risen John and others of the great prophetic line. Also, the religious leaders of the day were clashing with him at every turn. It is inconceivable that this string of events did not cause Jesus to reconsider his role in relation to John, to God, and to the Jewish people in their search for the fulfillment of their rich religious tradition.

And then Jesus withdraws. It is equally inconceivable that this perplexity was not a primary reason for the retirement -- just as the first great recorded crisis of his religious life, his baptism, prompted him to spend forty solitary days in the wilderness. Fear of Herod may have been part of his motive for leaving Galilee, but in the light of what has been said we feel it was a secondary reason.

For purposes of this investigation, the important thing about the withdrawal to Tyre and Sidon is simply that it occurred. The content of the event does have some relevance, however, because it reveals something of Jesus' attitude at the time. In his confrontation by the Syro-phoenician woman, Jesus says in so many words that his mission is limited to Israel. At this point the argument becomes quite conjectural, but we want to put forward the suggestion that the woman's reply, far from being a witty saying, as some scholars have suggested, may have influenced the thinking of Jesus.

Here it is pertinent to ask the question "Why did Mark record this particular story?" If he wanted simply to tell of Jesus healing a Gentile girl, he would not need to go to Tyre: there were plenty of Gentiles in Galilee. Perhaps the woman's compassion for her daughter, so great that she would continue to implore a man who likened her race to dogs, touched a deep, latent chord of understanding in Jesus, and he



realized that there was a real oneness, a common humanity, in all men. A Greek girl suffered as a Jewish girl, a Greek mother implored as a Jewish mother would. The term we translate as "saying" (Mk. 8:29), which pleased Jesus so much, does not have to be seen in the sense of a clever reply. It is the Greek *λόγον*, which can just as correctly be translated "story" or "news" or "word."<sup>1</sup> Is it possible that this strange event was another ray of light in the growth of Jesus' "world-view"? And is it not significant that Jesus returned to Galilee through Gentile territory (the Decapolis: Mk. 8:31)?

At least one prominent New Testament scholar sees the withdrawal to the region of Tyre and Sidon as the point at which Jesus' divine consciousness took definitive shape. Taylor notes that before the retirement to Tyre there is no evidence, apart from Mk. 2:19,20, that Jesus definitely connected his mission, as Son of man, with messianic suffering (the divine voice at his baptism reflects the influence of Isa. 42, not Isa. 53). He concludes that if the Markan tradition is accepted in its broad outline,

"...we have good reason to infer that, whether or not the idea of Messianic suffering had presented itself to the mind of Jesus earlier, it was during the withdrawal to the region of Tyre that, stimulated by the failure of the Galilean ministry and of the mission of the twelve, it fructified and became a dominating idea which determined all his future activities. Nor is this all. The fate of the Baptist, the history of the prophets, the hostility of Herod, and the enmity of the scribes and Pharisees, all pointed to the fact that the issue of his ministry was bound to be tragic."<sup>2</sup>

Certainly Jesus seemed to be pondering some weighty matter about this time. Additional evidence for this is seen in two interesting

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1 - Taylor, V., The Gospel According to St. Mark, p. 190.

2 - Taylor, V., The Life and Ministry of Jesus, p. 136.





notations by Mark in events he recorded between the withdrawal to Tyre and Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi. Here, Jesus "sighs" as he heals a man (7:34), and later "sighs deeply" as he is again confronted by the Pharisees (8:12). Taylor attributes the first sighing to Jesus' compassion for the sufferer,<sup>1</sup> but the proper meaning of the Greek word στενάζω is "sigh, groan because of an undesirable circumstance."<sup>2</sup> The same root is found in the usage of 8:12. In the first case, is Jesus revealing dissatisfaction with a healing ministry? And in the second usage, is Jesus tired of arguing as a religious teacher? This inference seems a legitimate one.

Such may have been the perplexity with which Jesus led his disciples again out of Galilee, this time northward to the area of Caesarea Philippi, near the foot of snow-clad Mount Hermon and the source of the Jordan River. Who was he, and what was to be his role? Recent events must have proved a sturdy crucible, for at Caesarea Philippi Jesus revealed a hard but definite answer to the second question, and hinted at the secret of the first.

Bultmann and Dibelius classify the account of Caesarea Philippi as a legend, but most scholars accept it as historical. These include Klausner, who maintains that the history of Christianity would be incomprehensible without it.<sup>3</sup> I believe Taylor outlines the fullest argument for its historicity,<sup>4</sup> and some of his points are: Mark's uncharacteristic pin-pointing of the setting; the life-like reaction of Peter; other sayings support the view that Jesus foresaw his suffering; the early Church would not call beloved Peter "Satan;" Jesus' reaction

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1 - Taylor, V., The Gospel According to St. Mark, p. 355.

2 - Arndt, W.F., and Gingrich, F.W., op. cit., p. 773.

3 - Klausner, J., op. cit., p. 300. Cf. Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 152.

4 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 374.





to being called "Christ" is true to the rest of the gospel. To these we might add that his question "Who do men say that I am?" is the natural outcome of preceding events. Branscomb suggests that those who regard this story as a legend of faith usually base their conclusion not on an exegetical treatment of the story itself, but on the general conviction that Jesus did not regard himself as the Messiah.<sup>1</sup>

One of the greatest unsolved problems in this passage is why Jesus asked the opening question about his identity. Was he asking for information because he had lost contact on his withdrawals? Was he trying to get the disciples' own opinions? Was he trying to test them? Was he using an introductory question as a teaching device? Personally, in view of the content and form of his second question ("But who do you say that I am?") I lean towards the last alternative, but this is a matter about which we can hardly do more than speculate.

We are on somewhat firmer ground when we investigate Jesus' reaction to Peter's reply "Thou art the Christ" (Mk. 8:29). We might say here that we agree with the scholars who feel Mark's more simple reply was the primitive and historical one (Luke adds "of God" and Matthew adds "the son of the living God"). Mark and Luke agree that Jesus commanded silence after Peter's reply, and both go on to teach that the Son of man must suffer many things, be rejected, killed, and rise again. Matthew, however, shows Jesus accepting Peter's confession much more positively and joyously (16:17), and following it with the promise concerning the building of the church and the giving of the keys of the kingdom.

Most commentators are dubious or downright sceptical about the

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1 - Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 144.



authenticity of all or part of Jesus' reply to Peter in Matthew 16:17-19.<sup>1</sup> The fact that Mark and Luke agree against Matthew in this is important, although we must remember that the first evangelist had access to Palestinian traditions which the others did not. But the value of these single, unconfirmed traditions is always precarious, and doubly so when they relate material which reflects so closely the belief and experience of the early Church.

What does Peter's affirmation and Jesus response really tell us about the self-consciousness of Jesus? Peter's statement may have implied several things, but we can be fairly certain it at least meant he recognized Jesus as the One in whom the hopes of Israel would be fulfilled. Jesus' command for silence thrusts upon us the interpretation of what scholars have come to call "the messianic secret" of our Lord. Its relevance to the divine consciousness of Jesus can be considered only when we have settled a prior question: did the call for secrecy originate with Jesus, or with the gospel writer? There is a strong suspicion among scholars that it could be the work of the evangelist, to explain why Jesus was not recognized as the Messiah by the multitudes during his earthly lifetime. On the other hand, it is entirely possible and natural that Jesus cautioned his closest followers in this matter to avoid a political furore at a time when his own self-consciousness was just beginning to take its definitive shape. If the former theory is true, the matter of messianic consciousness is irrelevant to our quest: it tells us only what Mark thought, not Jesus. However, I believe the command is genuine because it is so characteristic of Jesus and so appropriate for this particular occasion. Thus, I feel it is best explained as a counsel of prudence in

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1 - e.g. McNeile, A.H., op. cit., p. 240. Gullman, O., op. cit., p. 122; Robinson, T.H., op. cit., pp. 140-141; Johnson, S.E., and Buttrick, G.A., The Interpreter's Bible, vol. 7, pp. 450-451.







view of the potential political repercussions of such a public confession.

But the vital question still remains: can Jesus' command for silence be interpreted as an actual acceptance of the title "Christ"? Bultmann says Jesus never considered himself to be the Messiah, and rejects the authenticity of the call for secrecy,<sup>1</sup> but the opinion of scholarship lies heavily against him. However, among those who believe Jesus felt himself to be the Messiah in some sense, there is a disagreement on the use of the term in Mark 8:29 and parallels. George Foote Moore, the great authority on Judaism, says the term "Messiah" classically applied to various individuals and groups in the sense of "appointed" or "consecrated" by God to a unique task or mission.<sup>2</sup> It was even applied to Cyrus of Persia, a Zoroastrian (Isa. 45:1). Nearly all other authors either argue or assume that the New Testament referred to a single, particular figure, and from what we know of the first century situation, plus the context of certain New Testament passages (e.g. Lk. 3:15), we believe the latter view to be the correct one, at least in Jesus' milieu.

The most cogent case for the view that Jesus accepted in some way the title "Messiah" is that of Branscomb: (1) his disciples and intimates regarded him as such during his lifetime (the request of James and John for a place at his right and left hand is hardly a story the early Church would invent); (2) there would have been no resurrection-faith after his death if he hadn't mentioned the concept during his lifetime; (3) one of the certain things about the passion narrative is that Jesus was charged with being "King of the Jews"; (4) if Jesus denied he was the Christ, there would be little sense in keeping this episode

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1 - Bultmann, R., Theology of the New Testament, vol. 1, p. 32.

2 - Moore, G.F., quoted by Branscomb, op. cit., p. 151.



in the early tradition. Branscomb concludes:

"Without the assumption that Jesus accepted His disciples' expression of faith in Himself as 'the Anointed One,' the story of His last days and of the rise of the Christian movement becomes a series of unrelated and almost incomprehensible facts."<sup>1</sup>

If it is true that Jesus saw himself as the Messiah, and I believe it is, then we must hasten to qualify this by saying that in accepting the concept he changed it drastically, and this is the most probable explanation for his peculiar reserve towards the actual title. As it stood, the term was politically dangerous and religiously misleading because it interpreted his Messiahship in terms of current expectations, and did not express the true nature of his mission.

Thus Jesus accepted the title but did not use it: the difference is significant. And at this point he began to re-interpret the concept of the Messiah in a new and startling way: that he must suffer and be rejected and killed, and then be raised again. And to underline this change he used a different title: Son of man. Was this new concept of Messiahship the fruit of many days' pondering, of the death of John and the whisperings of the people, of the growing hard-heartedness of the religious leaders of the day, of a withdrawal into a foreign country and the faith and compassion of a foreign woman? Surely it is more than coincidence that both these experiences and Jesus' new teaching were dominated by suffering and rejection! This is the teaching that Jesus was to carry with him to the cross. Caesarea Philippi was the first point at which it became explicit, although it is strongly hinted in Jesus' teaching about the removal of the bridegroom in 2:20. Thus the trilogy of

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1 - Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 152.





events we have considered in this chapter form the climax and the point of no return in the emergence of Jesus' divine consciousness, and in a sense the rest of the gospel story is a working out of what Jesus first expressed at Caesarea Philippi.

Most scholars accept as authentic the general content of Jesus' teaching that the Son of man must suffer, although there is a tendency to see the details (e.g., "and after three days rise again") as projected back into the earthly life from what actually happened during the Passion, as those who passed on the oral tradition strove to find flesh to put on the bare skeleton of their story. It is entirely natural that whatever happened to Jesus was to some extent ascribed to his thought in his lifetime.

It is difficult to determine just when Jesus first saw his death as a necessary part of his work. C.J. Cadoux argues for the "inherent probability" that Jesus didn't foresee his death as necessary from the beginning, and reinforces his case with evidence: the nature of Jesus' early preaching and other missionary efforts, and his strong disappointment that Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum had not repented and that the children of Jerusalem had not gathered together under him.<sup>1</sup> However, the matter must remain largely conjectural. McNeile comments:

"At what period the Lord first knew that He would suffer a violent death cannot be determined; the probability must often have suggested itself when He set His face against the current ideas and practices, and when He avoided the dominion of Antipas after the Baptist's death....The several predictions of His Passion may not represent His actual words, but they rightly express the fact that He spoke, from now (Mt. 16:21) onwards, freely on the subject."<sup>2</sup>

Klausner gives three reasons for Jesus coming to view himself

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1 - Cadoux, C.J., op. cit., p. 251.

2 - McNeile, A.H., op. cit., p. 244.





as the suffering Messiah:<sup>1</sup> (1) the fate of John the Baptist; (2) his own persecution by the authorities; (3) he interpreted "the pangs of the Messiah," i.e., the signs of the age, to apply to himself personally. Goguel feels it worked this way: Jesus came to see that the kingdom of God must be brought in by suffering, and that the Messiah must suffer. At this point he became the centre of his message, and claimed the role and the title "Son of man." He summarizes his position in this fine statement:

"Jesus did not believe that he was the Messiah although he had to suffer; he believed that he was the Messiah because he had to suffer. This is the great paradox, the great originality, of his Gospel."<sup>2</sup>

It has puzzled scholars that Jesus' attitude seemed to be very similar to that expressed in the servant poems of Second Isaiah, yet he quoted Isaiah 53 only once in the synoptic accounts of his life (Lk. 22:37). However, Isaiah 53 was likely on the same scroll as Isaiah 42, with which Jesus was familiar (e.g., the words at his baptism), and the former passage was probably well-known to, and influential upon, him. It has been suggested that the ideas of Isaiah 53 are latent in many places in the thought of Jesus: Mk. 8:31; 9:12,31; 10:33,45; 14:24; Lk. 17:25.<sup>3</sup>

As Cadoux noted above, Jesus claimed the title "Son of man" for himself in this suffering role. But he also claimed it for himself in another role -- that of the heavenly Son of man coming in glory, a usage which brings to a close his recorded discourses at Caesarea Philippi. One of the most significant facts in the quest for Jesus' understanding of his own Person is that this was his name for himself,

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1 - Klausner, J., op. cit., p. 300.

2 - Goguel, M., op. cit., p. 392.

3 - Taylor, V., The Life and Ministry of Jesus, p. 142.



and that he would tacitly accept another title and then in his reply use this one as he referred to himself. Because this title may yield the best clue to Jesus' self-consciousness, we discuss it at length in a special chapter in Part III.

The fact that Peter was dumfounded and affronted by this new teaching of Jesus is not particularly vital to our investigation, but the fact that his remonstrance drew a sharp rebuke from Jesus may reveal that Jesus saw in him the popular, shallow concept of Messiahship, and reacted strongly to it. Jesus' outburst echoes the temptation narrative slightly, and has prompted more than one commentator to suggest that Jesus saw this type of Messiahship as a temptation.

Scholarship is almost unanimous in asserting that the block of teaching with which the event at Caesarea Philippi concludes, Mark 8:34-9:1 and parallels, does not belong there.<sup>1</sup> It is generally considered to be topically placed (and very well placed!), and containing elements of later traditions (e.g., "take up his cross" and "the gospel's"). Also, there is the reference to the "multitude," which would not likely be following Jesus around so far from home on this type of a journey. There is no evidence that he preached or healed or did anything else to draw crowds on this expedition. The reference to the heavenly Son of man will be considered at length in our treatment of Jesus' reply to the high priest's question in Mark 14:61,62, and in Part III.

Before we leave this section, we would like to use some evidence gathered by T.W. Manson to re-affirm the significance of Caesarea Philippi as a monumental determinative event in Jesus' outlook. Manson points out

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1 - e.g., Taylor, V., The Gospel According to St. Mark, p. 380; Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 155; McNeile, A.H., op. cit., p. 246; Grant, F.C., The Interpreter's Bible, vol. 7, p. 770.





four major differences in Jesus before and after Caesarea Philippi:

(1) His demands upon his disciples change. Before, he demanded insight and understanding; after he asked for loyalty and courage. The reason for this, Manson feels, is that once they grasped who he was, Jesus could take the next step and require loyalty of them. (2) The term "Son of man" is used almost exclusively after Caesarea Philippi. (3) After Caesarea Philippi Jesus speaks more of entrance into the kingdom of God than of the coming of the kingdom. (4) After Caesarea Philippi Jesus becomes more dogmatic in his statements: he uses the phrase "Truly, I say to you" nine times before and twenty-five times after (and three of the nine are in the sermon on the mount, and could be later).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> - Manson, T.W., The Teaching of Jesus. Cambridge: The University Press, 1951, p. 202.



## 5. The Transfiguration

This event is properly divided into two parts: that which occurred on the mountain (Mk. 9:2-8 and parallels), and the teaching of Jesus as he and the three disciples descended the mountain (Mk. 9:9-13 and parallels).

For the interpreter, this story is both difficult and simple. As a piece of religious literature, its import is clear and distinct: it is a confirmation of Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi immediately before; it is a divine attestation of the Sonship of Jesus. Scholars are almost unanimously agreed upon this. This is the event with which William Barclay concludes his edifying book The Mind of Jesus. He entitles his final chapter "The Recognition of Jesus By God," and says "At Caesarea Philippi Jesus put himself to the test of human recognition; on the Mount of Transfiguration he put himself to the test of divine approval."<sup>1</sup>

However, when we try to go back beyond the story as it stands and ask "What really happened?" we find that we are dealing with one of the most difficult events in the New Testament. Many hypotheses have been advanced: a vision, a legend, a symbolic story, a resurrection story read back into Jesus' life-time, an historical event.

There is probably an element of truth in several of these interpretations. The characteristic impulsive utterance of Peter suggests historicity; the presence of Elijah and Moses suggests both symbol (Law and Prophets) and legend. The cloud and the divine voice suggest a vision. There is general agreement, however, that some details in the story have been added or altered to express early Christian belief, especially in

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1 - Barclay, W., op. cit., p. 185.





the area of Christology. There is a feeling among some interpreters that the event was re-told in the tradition as an anticipation of the Parousia, and Grant expresses this by saying Mark is really describing a "Christophany" -- a manifestation of the Son of God in his true nature, as he will be seen on the last day.<sup>2</sup> The Greek word that we translate "transfigured" in Mark and Matthew is *μεταμορφώω*, "to transform, to change in form."<sup>3</sup> Paul uses the same term in Romans 12:2 and 2 Corinthians 3:18, but the idea is not necessarily Pauline, because Paul meant an inner and permanent change, and here Mark described an outer and temporary transformation. Luke refrained from using the term in his account of the Transfiguration, likely because of undesirable associations with pagan gods.

Probably the most important part of the narrative, both in the earliest days and now, is the proclamation of the heavenly voice. The first part of its statement is exactly the same as that at Jesus' baptism, and this fact has prompted Branscomb to ask why such a story was placed in the middle of Jesus' earthly ministry. He feels the logical place would be at the birth or resurrection. Then he proceeds to answer his own question:

"The answer which suggests itself is that there was a recollection in the Christian tradition that it was late during the ministry of Jesus that the Messianic element entered the story -- that is to say, that some such story as Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi was a well-known element of Christian knowledge, and that this story was connected with it."<sup>4</sup>

When the best efforts have been made, however, most authorities admit we cannot really get to the original facts behind what was a very real

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1 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 388; Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 161; Grant, F.C., op. cit., p. 774; Gilmour, S.M., The Interpreter's Bible, vol. 8, p. 173.  
2 - Grant, F.C., op. cit., p. 775.  
3 - Arndt, W.F., and Gingrich, F.W., op. cit., p. 513.  
4 - Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 162.



-- but indescribable -- religious experience. Its relation to the event at Caesarea Philippi has been summed up best by Taylor:

"...while it is impossible to say exactly what happened upon the mount, we may well believe that the confession of (Mark) 8:29 was deepened and confirmed in an incommunicable experience of prayer and religious insight."<sup>1</sup>

The fact that we cannot know what actually happened on the Mount of Transfiguration naturally hinders our quest for Jesus' self-consciousness at this point. One should note, however, that this event, like the baptism, could give us no direct clue anyway, because it is about Jesus. He is acted upon. He does and says nothing himself. (It is true that Matthew relates that he told the disciples not to fear, and Luke that he talked with Moses and Elijah about his departure from Jerusalem, but both of these passages are generally considered later additions to the tale.) This type of event can give us insight into his thinking only when it confronts him with certain ideas (as in the temptation narrative), when it results from something he has said or done (as the crucifixion) or when it is followed by a certain related response on his part (such as here, when he teaches the disciples as the four of them descend from the experience). It is to this teaching that we now turn.

There has been some disagreement among scholars concerning the authenticity of Mk. 9:9-13 (Mt. 17:9-13; Lk. does not record the passage). The form critics tend to view the dialogue as community sayings which grew up in the Church to reassure it when Christ did not return immediately, but Burkitt and Taylor argue that the passage is so abrupt, so unliterary and so obscure that it sounds like reminiscences of a real conversation.<sup>2</sup>

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1 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 388. Cf. Branscomb, p. 161; Grant, p. 777.  
2 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 393. Both arguments are outlined.





We might also add that it is extremely unlikely that Jesus would not have spoken to the disciples after such an experience, and it is even more inconceivable that the three disciples would not have remembered what he said after sharing it with them. This is one place where Jesus' words would have been remembered clearly; thus I accept the authenticity of the passage.

Whatever the mountain-top experience was, it did not essentially change Jesus' divine consciousness. On the way down the mountain he still spoke of himself as Son of man, and not as Son of God. This is one time when Jesus would have been especially tempted to speak of himself as Son of God, and if he had given any indication in this direction we can be sure that the tradition would have lapped it up (which also scores another point for the authenticity of the passage). Jesus also continued to command silence of his disciples concerning his Person, although the experience must have given him new depths of confidence. The fact that he speaks of rising from the dead presupposes that he still held fast to his belief that he must die.

The question asked by the disciples in Mk. 9:11 (Mt. 17:10) -- why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first? -- was evidently one that bothered the earliest Christians. One of the reasons most Jews did not accept Christ as Messiah was that they felt Elijah had not yet come. That this must happen was a belief held from the time of Malachi (4:5). This was one of the questions dealt with by Justin Martyr in his Dialogue With Trypho. Here Jesus (some would say Mark) gives the Christian answer: Elijah has indeed come (in John the Baptist).

It should be said, however, that there seemed to be two opposing traditions concerning John in the first century. John 1:21



specifically denies that the Baptist is Elijah, and Luke never mentions it. Mark is strangely silent about it in his earlier references to John, causing Branscomb to conclude that he (Mark) incorporated both views.<sup>1</sup>

But the important question remains: how did Jesus view John? Certainly, there is truth in the argument that the Church wanted John seen as Elijah and that this may have coloured some of the tradition. But there is also the fact that Jesus had a very high regard for John, and that John's death exerted an influence on his thinking. And if, as we have seen, that thinking leaned towards a form of Messiahship, it is quite conceivable that Jesus did in fact regard John as fulfilling the function of Elijah. Add to this the arguments we have outlined for the authenticity of Mk. 9:9-13 and the scales seem to tip in favour of this view.

One new note that is added in Mark's version is that it is written of the Son of man that he must suffer. This may have been implied in the teaching at Caesarea Philippi, but this is the first time it is said. Jesus likely had in mind Isa. 53 and Ps. 22, both of which he quoted on at least one occasion.

Meanwhile, at the foot of the mountain, there was a great commotion and a vivid contrast: scribes arguing, and the disciples vainly trying to heal a boy who foamed at the mouth and gnashed his teeth. Despite our mountain-top experiences, the world goes on below, and our brethren face opposition and frustration in their tasks. Jesus healed the lad, but this type of ministry was now at an end for him. Very soon he would set his face resolutely towards Jerusalem; his mind was already tuned in that direction.

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1 - Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 164.





## 6. En Route To Jerusalem

In our gospels there are two very different traditions about Jesus' travelling to Jerusalem. The synoptics agree there was only one such journey, at the climax of his ministry; John records Jesus making the trip several times. The general historical superiority of the synoptic tradition enhances the truth of the former position, and Dodd, in his great work on the fourth gospel, seems to accept this view as he comments upon the significance of the expedition:

"...this journey had acquired in Christian thought the character of a solemn procession to the place of sacrifice. The way from Galilee to Jerusalem is a via dolorosa in all gospels,<sup>1</sup> and apparently in the kerygma which lies behind them."<sup>1</sup>

Within the synoptics themselves, however, there are two traditions about the journey: Luke says Jesus went through Samaria and includes long blocks of teaching in his account of the trip; Matthew and Mark agree on a more direct trip to Judea, with much less material recorded en route.

The route of the journey has caused much difficulty for exegetes. At 9:52 Luke says Jesus went via Samaria, but at 18:35 and 19:1 he passes through Jericho, which is not consistent with a direct journey to Jerusalem from Samaria. One explanation is that Luke, with his more universal emphasis, had Jesus go through Samaria, but at the same time wanted to retain the Markan truth that he passed through Jericho, and so incorporated them both. Otherwise, our knowledge of the route is very scanty, and Branscomb feels this casts a shadow on our knowledge of this phase of Jesus' ministry:

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1 - Dodd, C.H., The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, p. 384.



"...the evangelist (Mark) is obviously poorly informed on the details of this part of Jesus' work. The statement in verse 1 (ch. 10) is very indefinite and the incidents which follow are not anchored to any particular places and strike one as simply floating traditions which could have happened anywhere."<sup>1</sup>

Luke's account of the journey runs from 9:51 to 19:41 and is the longest section in his gospel. It contains largely "Q" material and teachings peculiar to Luke. However, there is some doubt concerning the chronological authenticity of the third gospel at this point:

"It is clear that very much of the contents of these chapters is not in place in a genuine journey. The thronging multitudes (11:29, 12:1, 14:25), the sabbath day preachings (13:10), the offended Pharisees (14:1), the reports of Herod's hostility (13:31), suggest the background of the Galilean ministry rather than a set journey through Samaria to Jerusalem. Again, the great parables of chapters 14-16 are loosely strung together and have no close connection with the narrative."<sup>2</sup>

This argument is not insuperable if Jesus did in fact combine his journey with a teaching expedition, as Lk. 9:52 seems to suggest. However, the fact that Matthew and Mark agree against Luke on this matter, plus the points outlined above, seem to tip the scales in favour of those who doubt Luke's chronology. Also: the explanation that Luke wanted to incorporate a large amount of non-Markan material, and felt this was the place to do it, seems natural and probable. Luke followed the Markan source fairly closely for his account of the Galilean ministry, broke it off to follow his own source at 9:51, and picked it up again at 18:15.

While Jesus may not have taught at length en route, there is strong evidence that he did have a teaching and healing ministry in

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1 - Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 175.

2 - Creed, J.M., op. cit., p. 139.





Judea beyond the Jordan (Mk. 10:1, Mt. 19:2), and the passion narrative records several clashes with the religious teachers of the day in Jerusalem. That Jesus went to Jerusalem to die, and that he went on a teaching mission are not mutually exclusive. The fact that he did teach there, Taylor says, "indicates his conviction that the holy city must be given the opportunity to face the challenge of his message."<sup>1</sup> It should be noted, however, that much of Jesus' teaching both en route to, and within, Jerusalem emphasized the cost of discipleship for his followers.

One word in the Lukan account tells more of Jesus' attitude at this time than most events and teachings combined. It is the word *ἐστήριξεν* ("he set," RSV), describing Jesus' face in Lk. 9:51. Creed calls the expression, from the verb *στηρίζω*, "a Semitism,"<sup>2</sup> and notes that it was used in Dan. 11:17-19, Jer. 21:10 and Ezek. 6:2. This last usage, significantly, describes Ezekiel's Son of man figure: "Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them...." The words "steadfastly" (KJV) and "resolutely" (NEB) have no corresponding adverb in the Greek text, but they "emphasize the deliberate resolution that is implicit in the Semitism 'he set his face'."<sup>3</sup> The underlined words in the graphic phrase "his face was as though he were going to Jerusalem" (9:53, KJV) also do not occur in the Greek text, but this is surely the meaning which the author intended to convey.

While this word occurs only in the one source, the teaching and events of both the journey to Jerusalem and the passion narrative make one feel that this was indeed an accurate description of our Lord's countenance at this time. James and John saw what was in his face; it made them think

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1 - Taylor, V., The Life and Ministry of Jesus, p. 154.

2 - Creed, J.M., op. cit., p. 141.

3 - Gilmour, S.M., The Interpreter's Bible, vol. 8, p. 181.



in terms of a consuming heavenly fire (Lk. 9:54). And there is supporting evidence from Mark that Jesus' appearance and manner inspired awe, alarm and apprehension in the disciples (Mk. 10:32). Rarely does an evangelist show our Lord's emotions as clearly as here, and we agree with those scholars who feel this is a vivid personal recollection. Jesus now seems certain of his destiny, and its momentous significance wells up within him and manifests itself in his very features.

This sensation finds additional expression in Jesus' teaching as he proceeds southward. Three passages particularly reveal his self-consciousness: Mk. 10:33,34; Mk. 10:38; Mk. 10:45. All point to his death. The first one occurs directly after the statement about the disciples' fear and awe at his appearance, and is the third prophecy of his fate in Jerusalem. This prophecy is in much greater detail than the first two, and probably reflects the knowledge of events which subsequently happened.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, I feel that the essence of the prophecy is authentic because it reflects the natural outcome of past events, and because it is tied to an historical circumstance like that described in Mk. 10:32.

It has been said that the three prophecies of Jesus' death are one saying repeated three times by the synoptists, but I suspect rather that they are three illustrations of a teaching which he repeated several times (because the disciples did not understand). For the reason noted here and in the paragraph above I also accept as genuine the statement of Jesus (Mk. 10:38, Mt. 20:22) concerning his baptism and his cup. The fact is that it comes at the centre of a story which the

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1 - Taylor, V., The Gospel According to St. Mark, p. 436. Cf. McNeile, A.H., op. cit., p. 286.





early Church would not have invented because of the poor light in which it casts James and John. This verse really seems to be a more picturesque way of relating Jesus' sense of messianic suffering -- and this supports its authenticity, because Jesus taught in pictures. On the other hand, the use of the figures cup and baptism have sacramental overtones, which make them suspect. Taylor reminds us, however, that the use of the symbolism of water for the idea of calamity is frequent in the Old Testament,<sup>1</sup> and affirms the originality of the passage. He also points out that the use of the present tense in Jesus' statement is significant because it indicates an experience already begun within him. Jesus was beginning to feel the reality of his impending death, and that is why his remarks about it en route to Jerusalem need not be the objects of hyper-criticism, particularly when they are tied to difficult, primitive events.

The last saying of Jesus we will consider here is Mk. 10:45 (Mt. 20:28), a verse which has been the subject of endless controversy.<sup>2</sup> Some say it cannot be attributed to Jesus because it is too Pauline, too doctrinal, and out of context. Others hold that it is primitive, Jewish, scriptural (cf. Isa. 53) and in accord with the whole outlook and teaching of Jesus at the time. The Greek word translated "ransom" (*λύτρον*) has several meanings in the Old Testament, but is found only this once in the New Testament. McNeile says this saying would not be strange to Jewish ears,<sup>3</sup> and rabbinical doctrine was that the death of the righteous atones for others.<sup>4</sup> This idea of atonement can be seen in 2 Macc. 7:37,38 and 4 Macc. 6:28. Both arguments have their strong points, but the real question here is "Did Jesus know his death would atone for the lives of

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1 - Ibid., p. 441.

2 - The best argument for its authenticity: Taylor, pp. 444-446; Grant, p. 818. Against authenticity: Branscomb, p. 190.

3 - McNeile, A.H., op. cit., p. 290.

4 - Montefiore and Loewe, Rabbinic Anthology, pp. 225-232.



others?" The answer must always remain conjectural, but if Jesus knew the statement "upon him was the chastisement that made us whole" (Isa. 53:5b) and loved the God behind it -- and we can be sure he did -- then Mk. 10:45 could very well have come from his own mouth.

Why did Jesus speak with such dogmatic assurance once the journey had begun? T.W. Manson suggests this answer:<sup>1</sup> It became clear to Jesus that the kingdom of God must come by the strangely-overlooked need to acknowledge that in the kingdom of God God is king (Manson's underscoring), and the job of the Messiah is to be a servant par excellence, to work in God's way, which is merciful, redemptive love and self-giving. This way was a ministry. It was a ministry that involved teaching. But it was also a ministry that could -- and did -- lead to the ultimate in giving: one's very life.

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1 - Manson, T.W., The Servant Messiah. Cambridge: The University Press, 1961, pp. 76-77.





## 7. The Ministry In Jerusalem

The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on an ass is sometimes considered the beginning of the Passion narrative, because it marks the beginning of a week's events in Jerusalem which ended in his death, and because the sources become more cohesive at this point. However, following Burkitt, Goguel, Branscomb, Taylor and others, we feel Jesus had a ministry in Jerusalem, probably a longer one than the synoptic gospels record. Thus we will consider the last large block of synoptic material in two parts: the ministry in Jerusalem (Mk. 11:1-13:w and para.), and the Passion narrative proper (Mk. 14:1-16:w and para.). This distinction does not exclude the fact that Jesus' self-giving death was a ministry in the wider sense of the word. In this chapter title we use the term "ministry" in its narrower sense.

I believe the distinction is not only valid, but necessary, because the weight of evidence is that Jesus did have a teaching ministry in Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> He did not go there purely and simply to die. Another fact that justifies the division is this: there is somewhat less agreement among the sources concerning the Jerusalem ministry than for the Passion narrative proper.

It was Burkitt, in an article in the Journal of Theological Studies,<sup>2</sup> who first compiled convincing evidence against the synoptic account of Jesus' one-only weeklong visit to Jerusalem that culminated in his death, and asserted instead that Jesus was in Jerusalem twice: once in the fall and early winter for a teaching ministry, and again briefly in the spring (at Passover time) when he was arrested and

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1 - see pp. 104,105 above. Cf. references 2 on this page and 1 on p. 107.

2 - Burkitt, F.C., Journal of Theological Studies, vol. 17; p. 139 ff.



crucified. Between these two visits, it is suggested, he had his ministry beyond the Jordan. Goguel, Branscomb, Taylor and some others have accepted this hypothesis in part or in full,<sup>1</sup> and have interpreted the last chapters of the synoptic gospels in the light of it.

The basis of Burkitt's contention is that the setting of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem strikingly fits that of the Feast of Tabernacles. This was an autumn festival at which people carried green branches into the temple, and at which the "Hosanna" from Ps. 118 was intoned -- the same words we find in the synoptics' account of Jesus' entry!

Evidence from other sources also indicates a fuller ministry in Jerusalem than the synoptics would allow. John tells of Jesus going to the holy city several times, and while scholars agree that this work often subordinates history to theology, there is a growing feeling among commentators that John has hold of some valuable independent traditions. This may be one of them. There is also internal evidence from the synoptics themselves that Jesus' Jerusalem ministry was not so limited: Mk. 14:49; Mt. 23:37-39; and the possibility that the procuring of the ass and the room for the Last Supper were by pre-arrangement. Perhaps even more convincing is the failure of the synoptists, notably Mark, in their attempt to outline a chronology for the period in Jerusalem.

The great problem the synoptics raise by putting the crucifixion on the first day of the Passover has long been a headache for scholars. A lesser problem, but a very real one, is that the ministry in Jerusalem (i.e., the events of Mk. 11-13 and para.) is set in three (Mark) or even two (Matthew) days. This would not be so problematic but for the fact

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1 - Goguel, M., *op. cit.*, p. 250; Branscomb, B.H., *op. cit.*, pp. 198 ff.; Taylor, V., The Life and Ministry of Jesus, pp. 163 ff.





that Jesus does almost nothing the first two days, and then is heavily "overloaded" on the third day. Apparently, everything that is recorded from Mk. 11:20 to 13:w occurs on the third day. This moves Taylor to declare:

"It is manifest that the Evangelist (Mark) has imposed on 11:1-13:37 a chronological scheme to bring it into harmony with the Passion Narrative....He had no detailed knowledge of the Ministry in Jerusalem like that displayed in the Passion Narrative itself, and, in default of continuous tradition, was compelled to assemble in the best manner possible existing units of tradition which in some cases belonged to other periods in the Story of Jesus."<sup>1</sup>

Goguel, in attempting to explain the evangelists' editing, suggests not only paucity of knowledge, as Taylor does, but also confusion: that they confused Jesus' return to the city with his original arrival.

Burkitt's hypothesis must remain conjecture, albeit sound and valuable conjecture, based on good evidence. It helps to explain much about the Jerusalem ministry that the synoptic account leaves unsolved. This is all we can conclude with certainty. Any treatment of the material in Mk. 11-13 and parallels must take serious note of it.

In the light of what has been said, what does this section tell us about Jesus' self-consciousness? There are two things in this block of material that could yield guidance for our quest: the entry into Jerusalem, and some of the teaching purported to have been uttered there by Jesus, particularly the statement about the Messiah and the Son of David (Mk. 12:35-37 and para.), and the Apocalyptic Discourse (Mk. 13 and para.).

Jesus' other teaching in this section consists largely of

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1 - Taylor, V., *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 450. Cf. Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 193, and Goguel, M., op. cit., p. 405.



parables and what we might call "conflict-pronouncement stories" (e.g., the trick question of the Sadducees about the resurrection, and Jesus' reply, in Mk. 12:18-27 and para.). However, we cannot lean too heavily upon them to reflect the mind of Jesus at this point in his ministry because of what criticism has revealed about this section: that the chronological arrangement is imposed on the material, and the teaching could have come from other periods in Jesus' life.

On the other hand, the fact that much of the teaching was precipitated by clashes with Jewish religious leaders, and that one of its major themes is the demand for faithfulness and the cost of discipleship suggest Jerusalem as a setting and the final phase of the ministry as a time. But these are not strong enough reasons to dispel the doubts cast on the chronology of the Jerusalem teaching, particularly when the synoptics themselves openly disagree whether certain utterances were made before or after Jesus came to Jerusalem: e.g., Mk. 10:42-45 and Lk. 22:25-27; Lk. 10:25-28 and Mk. 12:28-31; Mk. 11:23 and Lk. 17:6.

But while the teaching of this section cannot help us delineate the emergence of divine consciousness in Jesus, there are three places in which his final understanding of himself, first seen at Caesarea Philippi, is confirmed. One is the parable-allegory of the Wicked Husbandmen in Mk. 12:1-11 and parallels. There is a strong possibility this was the work of the early Church. Such a suspicion arises when one considers the "neatness" of the allegory (God as owner, Jesus as the beloved son and heir, the husbandmen as Israel, and the servants as Old Testament prophets), the fact that Jesus normally used parables to express general spiritual truths, not as weapons, that there is a strong allegorical element in it, and that the whole story, allegorically interpreted, is very similar to





the historical outline in the preaching of Peter and Stephen. However, the fact that Jesus did foresee his death from Caesarea Philippi onwards demands that we at least recognize the possibility of its authenticity.

A hint that Jesus indirectly avowed his Messiahship before the public late in his ministry is found in Mk. 12:35-37 and parallels, where he quotes Ps. 110:1 to the Pharisees, ostensibly to prove that the Messiah need not be the Son of David. Taylor advances a very cogent argument for the credibility of this episode and pronouncement, and then goes on to deny that it says what it appears to say.<sup>1</sup> He contends the point is not to deny the Davidic descent of the Messiah, but that a much higher view of his origin and nature is necessary since David calls him Lord. There is much to commend such a "loftier" interpretation, but we must always be aware of an exegesis which goes beyond the actual content of the passage. I prefer Klausner's forthright view that Jesus cleverly used a piece of Scripture to explain a serious difficulty: he had declared himself to be Messiah, but the Messiah was to be a Son of David and he was a carpenter's son from Galilee.<sup>2</sup> This means that the genealogies and the birth stories are discredited, and that Paul (Rom. 1:3) can be wrong -- but these are things that need to be recognized, and said.

Something of Jesus' own divine consciousness may be embodied in the apocalyptic discourse of Mark 13 and parallels, but if so, it is hardly discernible. This discourse has been called "the despair of commentators,"<sup>3</sup> but practically all of them agree that the passage is a compilation of first-century apocalyptic sayings, or an edited Jewish or Jewish-Christian apocalypse incorporated with other eschatological sayings.

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1 - Taylor, V., The Life and Ministry of Jesus, p. 168; The Gospel According to St. Mark, pp. 491-493.

2 - Klausner, J., op. cit., p. 310.

3 - Taylor, V., The Life and Ministry of Jesus, p. 172.



Two items should suffice to show that the discourse is not a single literary work: (1) in Mk. 13:6-8 the false Christs are the beginning of the woes, while in verse 21 ff. they come in the midst of the calamity; (2) up to 13:31 it says there will be signs of the end, but verse 32 says no one knows anything about the day or hour.

Dodd feels the discourse is a reconstruction of the primitive Christian eschatology after the end does not come speedily. He calls it a "relapse" to a pre-Christian eschatology, and says it has influenced the teaching attributed to Jesus in the synoptic gospels.<sup>1</sup> The extent to which the discourse expresses the thought of Jesus is likely an insoluble problem, and many writers, including Dodd, take a position near that of Branscomb:

"It may be that genuine sayings of Jesus are to be found in the chapter, but the identification of these in the midst of a document which must be regarded as the product of Christian hope and prophecy is highly conjectural."<sup>2</sup>

The discourse includes a reference to the heavenly Son of man coming in clouds with power and glory (Mk. 13:26). We have already met this teaching at Caesarea Philippi (Mk. 8:38) and we will meet it again in the trial before Caiaphas (Mk. 14:62). We defer discussion of its meaning to the separate chapter in Part III.

The entry of Jesus into Jerusalem yields slightly more insight into his self-consciousness than the teaching we have just considered. A preliminary matter, however, is to establish the historicity of this event, which I believe Taylor does with a four-fold argument:<sup>3</sup> the local expressions at the beginning, the vivid character of the account, the

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1 - Dodd, C.H., The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments, pp. 81-85.

2 - Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 233.

3 - Taylor, V., The Gospel According to St. Mark, p. 452.





restrained nature of the acclamation, and the strange manner (in Mk.) in which the account breaks off without any suggestion of a "triumphal entry" (as in Mt.). I am not convinced of his third point, but the others do point to authenticity.

The interpretation of this strange episode is a much more difficult matter. Three basic explanations have been offered: (1) it was of Messianic significance; (2) a spontaneous outburst of disciples and pilgrims was afterwards interpreted in a Messianic sense under the influence of Zech. 9:9; (3) the narrative is a "Messianic legend." The weight of scholarly opinion seems to come down rather equally between the first two alternatives, or a combination of the two.

The nature and extent of the acclamation given Jesus has drawn forth disagreement among exegetes, but what is far more relevant to our investigation is what motivated Jesus to act as he did. Apart from giving the instructions to get the ass, Jesus says nothing (Luke excepted), and we have to draw our conclusions from the act itself. What was its significance in the mind of Jesus?

Branscomb says the use of an ass by Jesus is an unimportant detail,<sup>1</sup> but the general opinion of commentators is that it was "to show to His disciples and to the crowd the kind of Messiah He is, no man of war, but lowly, and riding upon an ass."<sup>2</sup> Both Taylor and Klausner refer to a saying of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, about 250 A.D.: "Behold, the Son of man comes 'on clouds of heaven,' and 'lowly, riding upon an ass.' If they (Israel) are worthy, 'on the clouds of heaven;' if they are not worthy, 'lowly, and riding upon an ass.'"<sup>3</sup> The pointed question now becomes:

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1 - Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 200.

2 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 452.

3 - Quoted by G.F. Moore in Sanhedrin, 98a.



Was such riding upon an ass seen as lowly and humble in and before Jesus' time? Klausner, who has nothing to gain by admitting so, says that it was, and interprets the entry in this manner:

"The point is clear: Jesus was minded to enter Jerusalem as the Messiah....he chooses, therefore, to enter it 'poor and riding on an ass,' thereby fulfilling the Scripture (i.e., Zech. 9:9)."<sup>1</sup>

McNeile echoes this view, and points out that the use of the ass in Zech. 9:9 is as the animal of peace, in contrast to the horse (and chariot) of battle.<sup>2</sup> He believes Jesus had in mind the words of Zechariah when he rode the ass, as do Taylor, Branscomb and Klausner.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, the events and teachings of the ministry in Jerusalem confirm the conviction that Jesus saw himself as the One whom God had chosen to fulfil the religious destiny of Israel. It was a self-consciousness that did not change essentially from that he held at the conclusion of his Galilean ministry and en route to Jerusalem. That he chose to express this self-consciousness in a prophetic act as he entered Jerusalem may indicate the continued misunderstanding of his vocal teaching by the disciples.

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1 - Klausner, J., op. cit., p. 309.

2 - McNeile, A.H., op. cit., pp. 294-297.

3 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 451; Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 197;  
Klausner, J., op. cit., p. 309.





## 8. The Passion Narrative

"If this Jesus was the Christ, as you claim, why was he crucified by the Romans?"

We can imagine the countless number of times this question was asked of followers of "The Way" as they attempted to propagate their new faith in the first decades after our Lord's death. And even when it wasn't asked in so many words, they felt they should answer it anyway -- because it really was a vital part of their Good News.

Thus the story of Jesus' death -- and the events which closely preceded and followed it -- became the first well-knit, solidified section in the Christian proclamation. Dodd's delineation of the apostolic kerygma has demonstrated this beyond doubt. The expanded form of this kerygmatic kernel stands in our gospels as what scholars call "the Passion narrative." Here, the synoptic gospels, and at times even John, tell essentially the same story of Jesus' last two days on earth. However, we must always recognize, as Branscomb reminds us, that "the very interest and importance of these events made them the objects of reflection, interpretation, and hence, inevitably, development."<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, this development can be traced more easily in the Passion narrative because nearly all events are recorded by all evangelists, and the accounts can be helpfully compared.

Within the Passion narrative there are four episodes which appear to yield clues to the divine consciousness of Jesus: the Last Supper, the agony in Gethsemane, the trials before the Jewish and Roman authorities, and Jesus' utterances from the cross.

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1 - Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 241.



The vital question concerning the Last Supper, of course, is "How much did early Christian worship influence the narrative as it now stands in the gospels?" The argument has raged loud and long, with some commentators seeing the hand of the early Church in almost every verse, others stoutly maintaining the authenticity of most sections, and a good many attempting to tread a difficult path between these two extremes. But from the midst of the din a statement by Goguel rings out in clarity and terse truthfulness:

"The narratives have been influenced by the liturgical practice, but this does not mean that the facts themselves did not give birth to the practice."<sup>1</sup>

Here we have a sound general base from which to explore the individual verses. And at the more microscopic level, we might do well to be guided by Taylor's suggestion that we not settle for the lowest common denominator (i.e., what all sources attest), because "each (source) is the deposit of an original tradition and its value must be appraised in relation to the rest."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus' statement in Mk. 14:21 and parallels that "the Son of man goes as it is written of him" is one that has precipitated division of opinion concerning its authenticity; another is 14:28 and parallels (Mk.): "But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." As far as the first statement is concerned, the onus rests heavily upon those who would reject its genuineness, because here Jesus is saying something he has said before, and under circumstances when it would be very natural for him to say it. So far, their arguments have remained unconvincing. Also, the obvious fact of Mark's restraint from the legendary accretion

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1 - Goguel, M., op. cit., p. 444.

2 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 543.





of Mt. 26:25 helps his case for historicity.

The second saying, however, does not stand up so solidly. True, Jesus has referred to his resurrection before, but usually as the conclusion of a regularly-worded passion prophecy (Mk. 8:31, 9:31, 10:34). Also, the saying proceeds more smoothly without the verse, unless *πρὸξω* is translated "I shall lead;" however, Mark uses the same verb in its other sense of "I will precede you" (into Galilee) in 16:7. The fact that Mark keeps "Galilee" in the tradition when the risen Lord did not meet them there (though he may have in the lost ending of Mark) can be cited as an argument for authenticity. Part of scholarship's suspicion about this verse is because it is felt to imply a return to the old relationship with the disciples.<sup>1</sup> However, it is clear from the testimony of the evangelists that they believed he had looked forward to a resurrection and advent of some kind.

This is particularly manifest in the Last Supper. All three sources (Mark-Matthew, Luke and Paul) agree that Jesus looked beyond the present ~~trouble~~ trouble and spoke of the time when he would drink of the vine anew in the kingdom of God. It should be said, however, that Paul's reference to this, the earliest set to writing, is reported in indirect speech and could conceivably represent some of his own thinking (I Cor. 11:26).

But what the evangelists reported and believed is just a preliminary step for our quest. What did Jesus believe? The fact that he spoke of this event beyond the present ~~trouble~~ trouble in terms of the kingdom of God seems to me the best argument for its historicity. The kingdom of God is perhaps the great unifying theme of both testaments. It was the

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1 - McNeile, A.H., op. cit., p. 387.



subject of Jesus' early preaching. And though we have seen his sense of relationship to it change (from a proclaimer to an instrument of its coming), it remained a basic concept in his thought right to the end. The concept was thoroughly Jewish and Jesus was thoroughly Jewish, as Klausner, Cadbury and others have demonstrated. That his existence beyond the Passion was outlined in these terms, in the increasingly Hellenistic environment of the primitive church, testifies that we are at, or very near, the bedrock of tradition. Several of the more thoroughly critical scholars feel this is the most reliable part of the narrative. C.J. Cadoux concludes:

"Amid much that is obscure in connexion with what took place and what was said and meant at that last meal, this at least is clear: for Jesus it was a solemn anticipation of the Messianic Feast in the Kingdom of Heaven, which he was apparently expecting to enjoy in the very near future."<sup>1</sup>

And with great care, Branscomb works out a reconstruction in which:

"...the basic elements are the announcement by Jesus of His approaching death at the time of a last meal with His disciples, and the promise of a renewal of their fellowship in God's kingdom."<sup>2</sup>

Probably the greatest problem with the Last Supper is interpreting what Jesus said -- and meant -- about his body and blood, in terms of the bread and the cup. That there is a strong sacrificial emphasis in the record is undeniable. Although there is only one definite reference to Jesus interpreting his death this way earlier in his ministry (Mk. 10:45, Mt. 20:28), it is quite possible that the relevant statements attributed to him at the Last Supper are his own, because of the general influence of Isa. 53 on his thought.

One of the real difficulties here is the relationship of the blood and the cup (i.e., wine). According to Mark and Matthew, Jesus

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1 - Cadoux, C.J., op. cit., p. 326.

2 - Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 263. Cf. Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 547 and McNeile, A.H., op. cit., p. 386.





gave them the cup to drink and said "This is my blood of the covenant" (Mk. 14:24; Mt. 26:28). But a good Jew would be repulsed by this. As Klausner says: "The drinking of blood, even if it was meant symbolically, could only have aroused horror in the minds of such simple Galilean Jews."<sup>1</sup> Christian scholars have tended to ignore this embarrassing fact in their exegesis of the Supper; they must not, for if sustained, this objection weakens our argument for authenticity and most of our interpretative efforts.

Fortunately, I believe an explanation is possible, and that it is to be found in a comparison of two of the three major sources for the Supper. There seems to me to be a significant difference between the statement "This (cup) is my blood of the covenant" (Mk. Mt.) and "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (I Cor. 11:25). Both retain the sacrificial element (blood), the means of participation (the cup) and the idea of covenant. But the Pauline formulation -- the earlier one, significantly -- does not make the wine blood! Mark says the cup is the blood; Paul says the cup is the covenant. This distinction is maintained, perhaps even increased, when we go back to the Greek text: *ΤΟῦΤΟ ἔστιν τὸ αἷμά μου τῆς διαθήκης* (Mk., Mt.); *ΤΟῦΤΟ τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ ἐμῷ αἵματι* (I Cor.). Here, the clauses fall directly in the order in which they are translated into English, leaving no ambiguity.

From the more primitive Pauline utterance, then, it would be possible to trace back to Jesus himself an interpretation which weaves the three elements (blood, cup, covenant) into a meaningful whole without making the disciples drink blood, even symbolically. The interpretation

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1 - Klausner, J., op. cit., p. 329.



might go something like this: my blood is poured out for many; this pouring out signifies a new covenant; we drink the cup to seal (remember, signify) this covenant. This same line of thought might be followed for the body and bread, which does not raise the same problem in the Jewish mind.

The question of how Jesus' death brings man into a new relationship with God is one that has plagued theologians for centuries. Their job would be much easier if Jesus had given any clear indication of how this works, but the fact is that he did not. It has even been suggested that Jesus did not know himself:

"He has accepted this mysterious law without needing to know how this death could be the condition of the fulfillment of the kingdom of God and of his coming as the glorious Messiah."<sup>1</sup>

However, our dullness often exceeds that of the disciples, yea, the scribes and the Pharisees, and we should not let our limitations be mirrored in the mind of our Lord. At this point it would be better just to admit that we are out of our depth. However, from the pen of this same author comes what I consider the best summary of what the Last Supper reveals of the self-consciousness of Jesus. Goguel sees the Supper as

"...the symbolic expression of the idea which had dominated the thought of Jesus during the whole of the second part of his ministry: of the Son of Man who must suffer and be rejected, but who will later return in glory."<sup>2</sup>

The incident in the Garden of Gethsemane is one of the most potentially explosive events in our entire study. Here, the picture of the "appalled and agitated" (Moffatt) Jesus is in striking contrast to

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1 - Goguel, M., op. cit., p. 450.

2 - Ibid., p. 451.





his serenity and acceptance of his fate in the upper room and before.

Except for Bultmann, Goguel and F.C. Grant, the strong consensus among both radical and conservative scholars is that the story is historical. It is vivid and uncomplimentary to Peter, and many feel it could only have come from Peter himself. The case for authenticity can be seen in Taylor's question: "Why, in contrast with the martyrs who faced death with serenity, is it said that Jesus 'began to be greatly distressed and troubled'?"<sup>1</sup> The fourth evangelist apparently asked the same question and decided that a divine being does not act this way, for he omitted the story (indeed, he repudiates it in 12:27-30). Matthew and Luke soften the Markan language describing Jesus' distress, a point we will return to shortly.

One seemingly pedestrian question which is always asked in a discussion of the episode is this: "How do we know what Jesus prayed? After all, even if the disciples were close enough to hear, they were asleep." Because this is the kind of question many people are asking, and because it bears upon historicity of the event, it deserves an answer. We must remember that the disciples were only a short (μικρὸν) distance away, that Jesus prayed passionately and loudly, and that the disciples were asleep when he returned, not when he first went away. They could easily have overheard the first part of the prayer.

This does not mean, however, that we should press for the verbal accuracy of the words of the prayer. Mark alone reports the prayer first in indirect speech and then in direct quotation. Branscomb feels that the recollection of the disciples is summed up in the verse of indirect quotation (Mk. 14:35), and that Jesus' words, "while no doubt

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1 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 551.



true to His general attitude, are probably an elaboration by the Church."<sup>1</sup>  
McNeile suggests the prayer was beyond articulate re-utterance, "but the records convey a living picture of what must have been His attitude of mind."<sup>2</sup>

One of the keys to unlocking the mystery of this incident may be the word *ἐκθαυβεῖσθαι* (Mk. 14:33). It is the first word Mark uses to describe Jesus' condition, and has been translated as follows: "greatly amazed," KJV; "appalled," Moffatt; "greatly distressed," RSV; "horror," NEB. Matthew shrank from using it and substituted *λυπεῖσθαι*, "sorrowful." Luke omitted it altogether. This primitive, uncomplimentary (according to the other evangelists) usage by Mark indicates historicity, but it raises a very profound question: was Jesus actually shocked by the realization that a bitter "cup" was now upon him? The use of the Greek word suggests this. Swete<sup>3</sup> says the word meant "terrified surprise" or "the distress which follows a great shock," and Lightfoot believes it carried a sense of confusion (the same usage it has in Plato, Phaedrus, 251d). Arndt and Gingrich list three meanings for the verb, in this order: be amazed; be alarmed; be distressed.<sup>4</sup> And it is noteworthy that in the Revised Standard Version of the Bible the word is used four other times in the New Testament, all in Mark and all referring to the disciples -- and it is translated "amazed" in each case (Mk. 9:15; 10:32; 16:5,6)!

The evidence is strong, then, that Jesus was described as being in some sort of amazement, or surprise, or at least confusion, as he considered his fate in the loneliness and darkness of the Garden. If this was actually so we may have to admit doubt as to Jesus' certainty

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1 - Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 268.

2 - McNeile, A.H., op. cit., p. 390.

3 - Swete, H.B., quoted by Taylor, op. cit., p. 552.

4 - Arndt, W.F., and Gingrich, F.W., op. cit., p. 239.





of his destiny as it is portrayed in other parts of the gospels. This is the conclusion that Klausner arrives at, almost gleefully, it would seem:

"It is all very human and very tragic, and very different from what the Gospels wish to convey as to Jesus' foreknowledge of what awaited him, as well as from what most Christian scholars try to prove--that Jesus, knowingly, went up to Jerusalem to die. Jesus had no foreknowledge of his impending death."<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, Klausner casts a shadow over the value of his judgement when he reveals his own strong bias by dismissing the words "if it were possible" (Mk. 14:35) and "not what I will, but what thou wilt" with no other reason after so stoutly maintaining the historicity of the event. This does not relieve us, however, from the task of trying to understand why Mark used this word to describe Jesus.

One possible answer is that advanced by Rawlinson, that the Greek verb means amazement in the sense of "shuddering awe, as of one conscious of being in the presence of a supernatural mystery which excites terror."<sup>2</sup> When all is said, however, the simplest and truest explanation may be that the eyewitnesses perceived this to be Jesus' emotion (whether it really was or not), likely in the sense described by Rawlinson, and used the term without much thought in their original reporting of the event.

Jesus' use of the figures "cup" and "hour" to describe his ordeal are not new. He spoke of this same type of cup in Mk. 10:38, and he referred to "the hour" -- meaning the appointed time -- in Mk. 1:15 and 13:32. Taylor claims the use of the term ἡ ὥρα was eschatological in origin<sup>3</sup> and refers to Dan. 11:40,45, but other evidence for this is

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1 - Klausner, J., op. cit., p. 331.

2 - Rawlinson, A.E.J., op. cit., p. 211.

3 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 553.



lacking and Arndt and Gingrich make no mention of the term having such an independent meaning in New Testament times.<sup>1</sup>

Why did Jesus act and speak as he did in the Garden? The replies are legion but the answer is lacking. We will list some attempts: he wasn't afraid for himself, but for mankind that he represented; he was frightened of death as he interpreted it; it was the natural tension between acceptance of a destiny and the shrinking of a sensitive spirit; he realized for the first time the horror of his fate in its fullness; he had hoped all along there might be another way, and now he realized there wasn't; he had last-minute doubts that this was the way and had to clarify his thinking in prayer.

There seems to be an element of truth in several of these replies, and most of them are put forth only as suggestive and tentative attempts to probe a profound mystery. The variety of answers alone indicates that none can be considered definitive. This is one place at which nearly every commentator goes his own way. All we can say for certain about Gethsemane and the self-consciousness of Jesus is that it showed he was conscious of a humanity within himself: the symptoms of, and affinities with, our finitude. Our fears, our hopes -- and our need for faith.

The trials before the Jewish and Roman authorities do not yield much insight into the divine consciousness of Jesus. In both trials, according to Matthew and Luke, Jesus answered questions concerning his own view of his person either with silence, or with an evasive or non-committal answer such as "you have said so" or "you say that I am." In John, Jesus is not asked directly about his claims to Messiahship or Sonship, but he is queried about his claim to a Kingship. Here again

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1 - Arndt, W.F., and Gingrich, F.W., op. cit., p. 905.



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his answer is not direct: "Do you say this of your own accord...my kingship is not of this world...you say that I am a king...." (John 18:33-38).

Only in Mark's gospel does Jesus make what appears to be a simple, direct reply (to the question "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"). He says to the high priest: "I am; and you will see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming with the clouds of heaven" (Mk. 14:62). At his Roman trial, he invokes the answer "You have said so" (Mk. 15:2). We should note, however, that all three synoptists, despite their disagreement about the first part of Jesus' reply to the high priest, record that he went on to speak of the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and (Mk., Mt. only) coming on the clouds. Here Jesus uses the language of Ps. 110:1 and Dan. 7:13. This latter part of the reply can best be discussed in the "Son of man" chapter in Part III.

No disciple was present at the trials that we know of, and for their information the gospel writers depended upon hearsay; there would have been plenty. The lack of an eye-witness's artless details is evidence the account was based on such hearsay and tradition. This does not necessarily discredit the report, however. The silent dignity of Jesus reported by all synoptists at one place or another in the trials is consistent with the rest of his portrait, and would have made a strong impression on the spectators, which in turn would likely strengthen the fidelity with which they related the proceedings.

The Jewish trial was not likely a trial of the Sanhedrin, as Mark states, because nearly every rule of Sanhedrin procedure was violated. It may have been, as John has it, simply an examination by



the Jewish authorities prior to a trial before Pilate, possibly to determine the official charge. Montefiore admits that it could have been an illegal trial, remarking that "there have been illegal trials at all times."<sup>1</sup>

Events both previous and subsequent to the Jewish hearing, however, make it clear that at least two elements of the proceedings were historical: a reference to the destruction of the temple by Jesus, and some form of challenge to him about his alleged claim to Messiahship. Jesus' remark about the destruction of the temple is recorded by all four evangelists early in his Jerusalem ministry, and was brought against him at the crucifixion. Jesus' claim to some sort of Messiahship, indirect though it has been so far in the synoptics, was in the mind of the people at the time, and is the basic charge laid against him (in the term "King of the Jews") at his Roman trial and crucifixion.

The words and manner of Jesus at both trials have usually been interpreted as a guarded acceptance of the Messiahship, though on his own understanding of it.<sup>2</sup> In other words, it is felt that if he wanted to deny or repudiate the role outrightly, he would have done so here. This interpretation has been advanced by scholars who both accept and reject the authenticity of Mark's affirmative answer in 14:62. I believe it is a valid conclusion.

This decision, however, again raises the question "How did Jesus see himself as Messiah?" This problem has been treated indirectly at several points, but this seems the natural place for a final evaluation. Several points should be made: (1) Jesus showed extreme reserve toward the title "Messiah," but did not reject it outrightly; (2) something in his

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1 - Montefiore, C.G., quoted by Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 645.

2 - E.g., Taylor, p. 568; Branscomb, p. 279; Rawlinson, p. 222; McNeile, p. 402; Creed, p. 275.





manner and teaching made his followers want to call him "Messiah;" (3) he considered the current popular ideas connected with the role as Satanic temptations (Mk. 8:33); (4) in decisive passages he substituted "Son of man" for "Messiah;" (5) he felt the religious destiny of his people to be somehow fulfilled in himself. We will let Cullman, commenting on Mk. 14:62 and parallels, state what would be our conclusion:

"The most important conclusion to be drawn from an investigation of the passage is that...Jesus deliberately corrected the high priest's question by substituting the "Son of Man" for the "Messiah." Jesus knows that the specific ideas relating to the Jewish Messiah are of a political nature, and nothing is more foreign to his conception of his calling. In order to prevent all misunderstanding from the very beginning, he purposely avoids the title "Messiah." But in order to make it clear that he does not thereby give up his conviction that he has to fulfill in a special sense God's plan of salvation for his people and therefore for all humanity, he adds immediately the sentence about the "Son of Man."<sup>1</sup>

Thus we see the significance of the "Son of man" concept, and why it is advisable to treat it in a separate chapter.

After his trial before Pilate, Jesus says nothing until he is on the cross, except for a single tradition in Luke in which he bids the women of Jerusalem weep over themselves rather than him, and foretells unhappy days ahead (23:27-31) as he carries his cross to Golgotha.

The four gospel writers report Jesus making seven utterances from the cross. However, there is a thorny problem of authenticity with most -- some say all -- of them. Six of the seven sayings are reported by only one evangelist (three in Luke, three different ones in John). Mark and Matthew agree that Jesus said "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mk. 15:34, Mt. 27:46) and record no other words from him.

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1 - Cullman, O., op. cit., p. 120.



The utterances in Luke and John could be genuine, but because of lack of corroboration, and because they are in the two latest gospels, we cannot lean too heavily upon them in our attempt to plumb Jesus' self-consciousness while he was on the cross. In any event, only two of these six sayings are relevant to our quest: "Today thou shalt be with me in Paradise" (Lk. 23:43) and "It is finished" (John 19:30). Some believe the latter quotation to be the content of the wordless "loud cry" with which Jesus breathed his last in Mark (15:37) and Matthew (27:50), but this is speculation and remains beyond means of demonstration either way. The Greek word used here, *τετέλεσται*, could conceivably be a very significant one, indicating that Jesus felt his death was the completion or fulfillment of his work. For the full discussion see page 53 above.

The Lukan saying does not give us a great deal of help, whether it is genuine or not. It does purport to tell us, however, that Jesus knew there would be an immediate transition at death into a state of bliss, and that he was able to say who would be a recipient of this gift. "Paradise" is a word borrowed from the Persian language, and is used nowhere else on the lips of Jesus.

The so-called "cry of dereliction" in Mark and Matthew, with its superior claim for authenticity, is the one which produces the most searching exegetical difficulty, particularly for the question we are asking. The problem it raises is essentially that of the agony in Gethsemane: does (or should) a divine being act this way in the face of death? Here, the tension is more acute because this is the last recorded word of the earthly Jesus in the two earliest gospels, and because it does not end (in the text, at least) on a note similar to "nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."





One of the primary academic problems arising from this utterance is whether Jesus cried out in Hebrew or Aramaic, as the Greek transliteration in Matthew suggests the former, in Mark the latter. The point here is that the cry would have to be originally in Hebrew for the people at the scene to mistake the first word of it (אֱלֹהִים, Ps. 22:1, Hebrew, "my God") for "Elijah" (אֵלִיָּהוּ); the Aramaic word (אֵלִיָּהוּ) is not so similar (Mk. 15:35; Mt. 27:47). But would Jesus, at this critical moment, have forsaken the language he used all his life for the classical language of the scribes? It seems unlikely. This question as it stands does not really concern us -- it is only relevant insofar as it bears upon the authenticity of the cry. In this respect, we face the following situation: unless Jesus did, in fact, switch to Hebrew at this moment, either the cry of dereliction or the incident about the bystanders thinking he called for Elijah (or both) faces discreditation. The only other alternative, a slim one, is that the remark of the bystanders had nothing to do with mistaking his first word, but was made simply because Elijah was a popular figure in the thinking of the day.

The majority of scholars accept the historicity of the cry for a strong, simple reason: it is too offensive to be invented. Proof of this offensiveness, they say, lies in the fact that Luke and John omitted it. There are a number of good men, however, who are doubtful or frankly sceptical (Dibelius, Cadoux, Branscomb, Grant, Bultmann). Their argument generally goes something like this: the earliest Christians wanted to interpret Jesus' death in terms of Old Testament prophecy; they noted striking similarities between certain facts of the Passion and Ps. 22 (verses 2,6-8,14-18); they took Jesus' wordless cry of death and gave it the content of Ps. 22:1. To this they add the difficulty about



Jesus crying out in Aramaic, outlined in the previous paragraph.

Obviously both theories cannot be right, and one is required to make a choice. The second argument is more complex and ingenious, but Taylor would say it does not take the saying seriously enough.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the argument for authenticity is almost too simple. I sometimes wonder whether there is a limit to our use of the argument "It is too uncomplimentary; it must be genuine." It is unfortunate that we do not have more guidance from scholars, if it is possible, on the mind(s) of the evangelist(s) -- their presuppositions, their attitudes towards recording facts, their methods, their goals. However, the fact remains that Mark particularly has recorded uncomplimentary things about Jesus before (3:21; 4:38; 6:5; 10:18), and that Luke and John saw the cry of dereliction in this light; this makes it difficult to dislodge as an historical occurrence. Add to this the principle that, when in doubt, take the more difficult alternative, and we must come out on the side of those who uphold the reality of the saying. The alternative raises a strong "reasonable doubt," but the context is not a British courtroom and it is not enough to win the case.

This is one place at which the question of interpretation is particularly dependent upon historicity. Those who deny that Jesus uttered the cry say, of course, that for the evangelists it expressed faith, victory or Hebrew piety. But those who affirm the historicity must try to say what it meant to Jesus, and this is vastly more difficult.

A number of reputable scholars (Goguel, Klausner, Cadoux, Stauffer, T.H. Robinson) frankly feel that Jesus experienced a real sense of abandonment and despair. Robinson suggests significance in

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1 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 594.





Jesus' use of the term "God":

"Nowhere else in the gospels does Jesus address God as God; elsewhere, even in the supreme agony in the garden, it is his Father to whom he appeals, with all the boundless wealth of affection that lies in the infant name 'Abba.' In that moment Jesus knew the experience that sin brings to us all, and he alone could know how unspeakably terrible it was."<sup>1</sup>

Taylor is another who feels that the burden of mankind's sin was a major factor in Jesus' despondency at this moment, although he does not sense so complete an estrangement as some:

"The depths of the saying are too deep to be plumbed, but the least inadequate interpretations are those which find in it a sense of desolation in which Jesus felt the horror of sin so deeply that for a time the closeness of His communion with the Father was obscured."<sup>2</sup>

These attempts to probe the mind of Jesus on the cross are sensitive and thoughtful, but the authors are the first to admit their inadequacy. More and more, we come to the point where we must admit we are confronted by an enigma, the secret of which does not yield itself up to the mere study of the printed page or the lettered fragment. In the words of Rawlinson:

"...on the assumption that our Lord really uttered the words it is better to say frankly that we do not know exactly what was in His mind at the time, that we are here face to face with the supreme mystery of the Saviour's Passion."<sup>3</sup>

Thus, our conclusion, as our problem, is that of Gethsemane: here we have a Lord who was fully man. We cannot go much beyond this. Looking at it with the eyes of faith, however, we would say with Barclay:

"It may be that there is something--if we may put it so--more human here. It seems to me that Jesus would not be Jesus unless He had plumbed the uttermost and ultimate depths of human experience...so that there might be no place where we have to go where He has not been before."<sup>4</sup>

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1 - Robinson, T.H., op. cit., p. 232.

2 - Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 594.

3 - Rawlinson, A.E.J., op. cit., p. 236.

4 - Barclay, W., The Gospel of Matthew, vol. 2. Edinburgh: The St. Andrew Press, 1959, p. 407.



### PART III -- TOWARDS A CONCLUSION

#### 1. The "Son of Man" Concept in Jesus' Thought

If there is any term or concept in the New Testament that holds the key to the mystery of the divine consciousness of Jesus, it is probably the phrase "Son of man." As we will come to see, this was the primary -- perhaps the only -- self-designated religious title of our Lord. In the New Testament it is found exclusively in the gospels, except for Acts 7:56. And without exception it is found on the lips of Jesus (an apparent exception in John 12:34 is really an indirect quotation of Jesus). No one else calls him by this name: disciples, the multitudes, Paul nor other New Testament writers.

The significance of this concept in the search for Jesus' understanding of himself has long been recognized, and much ink and sweat has been expended in efforts to precipitate out its true meaning in his mind. Nearly every Biblical scholar has written his piece on it. The term takes us back at least into the latest period of Old Testament literature and has many aspects. To treat all or even some of these fully would be a thesis in itself. What we propose to do here is glean the best findings of those who have gone this way before, particularly in background areas such as etymology, Old Testament usage and meaning, and inter-testamental development, and apply them to penetrate Jesus' use of the concept, especially in the light of what has been said in Parts I and II. Despite the difficulty of the title, scholarship has made some headway, notably in the areas of origin and background.





Our term "the Son of man" in the English Bible is a translation of the Greek  $\acute{\omicron} \upsilon\iota\acute{\omicron}\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon \alpha\nu\theta\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\omicron\upsilon$ , which in turn is a slavish literal rendering of the Aramaic idiom bar nasha ( $\bar{\text{ܠܝܕܢܫܐ}}$ ). The basic meaning of the Aramaic is "a man" or "a son of mankind," i.e., a member of the human race as opposed to an animal. However, the term was also used in a wider sense. The first part of the phrase, bar ( $\bar{\text{ܠܝܕܢܫܐ}}$ ) "son," was often used in the figurative sense: son of wealth, son of sin, son of the lie. Early in the century Wellhausen and others argued that bar nasha could not mean anything more than "man," but scholars have gradually come to agree with Dalman that the meaning rises above the generic sense and admits of "the Man" or, "the Son of man," with a messianic or apocalyptic overtone, to be determined by the context.<sup>1</sup> It is generally felt that this distinction was preserved in most references to  $\acute{\omicron} \upsilon\iota\acute{\omicron}\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon \alpha\nu\theta\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\omicron\upsilon$  in the Greek New Testament.

The importance of the context becomes clear when we realize that the utterance "bar nasha" on the lips of Jesus or in an Aramaic record of what he said is so easily capable of misunderstanding when it stands as a word alone, as T.W. Manson has reminded us.<sup>2</sup> Thus the problem is not primarily a linguistic one; it is more involved with ideas and concepts.

The pre-Christian antecedents of the phrase lie largely in two documents: the Old Testament book of Daniel (c. 165 B.C.), and the extra-canonical book of Enoch (c. 100-50 B.C.). The use of the term in Ezekiel and Psalms is not really relevant here because its context in these books show that it was meant only as a synonym for "man."

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1 - Bowman, J.W., op. cit., pp. 122-23; Taylor, V., op. cit., p. 197.  
2 - Manson, T.W., The Teaching of Jesus, p. 212.





Daniel, in his vision, sees "one like a son of man"<sup>1</sup> who came with the clouds of heaven and was presented to the Ancient of Days (7:13). This figure seems to be identified with the "people of the saints of the Most High" (7:14,18) in the interpretation of the vision, which is given Daniel in a second vision in 7:15-28 (the original vision is in Dan. 7:2-14). Thus the term appears to admit of a corporate interpretation: the ideal Israel of the future, or the saved and saving Remnant. This interpretation is now accepted by the majority of scholars, some, however, with strong qualifications.<sup>2</sup> Leading the dissenters is Vincent Taylor, who admits of a communal figure at a surface reading, but says when the context is taken away, we have "an individual of supernatural dignity and power."<sup>3</sup> I feel that both the "corporate" and "individual" interpretations are possible and not mutually exclusive; rather, they seem interchangeable if one understands what the writer is trying to express. It should be noted, however, that both the context and the Aramaic phrase itself suggest a human figure is meant (see Note 1 below),

In chapters 37-71 of the Ethiopic translation of Enoch, the "Son of Man" appears as an eschatological world Redeemer and Judge who was to come from heaven and rule the righteous. Although he bore the outward semblance of a man, he was, in Barclay's words, "a divine,

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- 1 - The Aramaic in the T.R. of Dan. 7:13 is ܐܢܝܢ ܕܢܫܐ (bar ' nash) and best translates, on a purely linguistic basis, as "a man" (i.e., human being) because it does not have the definite article before the second noun (as in Bowman's distinction, p. 123). Thus context must determine the meaning.
- 2 - E.g., Sigmund Mowinckel, who feels Daniel got his figure from older traditional material where he was seen as an individual. Mowinckel, however, produces no evidence for this hypothesis. He That Cometh; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1956, p. 351.
- 3 - Taylor, V., Jesus and His Sacrifice, p. 21.





superhuman, pre-existent figure waiting beside the throne of God to be unleashed with victorious power against the enemies of God."<sup>1</sup> The argument rages again whether Enoch's Son of Man is symbolic of ideal or redeemed Israel, but this time the weight of opinion leans against the interpretation. T.W. Manson, who upholds it, contends that the terms "the Elect one" and "the Righteous one" (describing the Son of Man) are the interchangeable singular terms for the body made up by individuals included in the plural terms ("the Righteous ones, the Elect ones").<sup>2</sup> However, Taylor decisively retorts that it is not necessary to interpret the relevant passages in this way, especially since in Enoch 62:13 ff. the righteous and the elect are expressly distinguished from the Son of Man in a way which emphasizes the personal character of the latter:

"And the righteous and the elect shall be saved on that day...  
And the Lord of Spirits will abide over them,  
And with that Son of Man shall they eat  
And lie down and rise up for ever and ever."<sup>3</sup>

The usage (both extent and meaning) of the term "Son of man" in the period from the closing of the Old Testament canon to the time of Jesus remains clouded: evidence is very scarce. That Enoch's picture of the Son of man could well be representative of the period is witnessed to by the general apocalyptic temper in Palestine at the time, but beyond this little can be advanced save intelligent speculation. Bowman says he agrees with G.F. Moore, R. Otto, Dalman, Goguel and T.W. Manson that the term was interpreted messianically before Jesus' time.<sup>4</sup> Goguel and Mowinckel believe that its usage then was quite rare.<sup>5</sup> Dodd, however, goes against the current and maintains that Daniel and Enoch

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1 - Barclay, W., The Mind of Jesus, p. 153. Cf. Enoch 46:1,3; 48:2f.; 51:3; 62:2,6f.; 69:27-29.

2 - Manson, T.W., The Teaching of Jesus, pp. 227-28.

3 - Quoted in Jesus and His Sacrifice, p. 25.

4 - Bowman, J.W., op. cit., p. 125. Cf. Klausner, J., op. cit., p. 256.

5 - Goguel, M., op. cit., p. 576. Mowinckel, S., op. cit., p. 348.





do not use "Son of man" in a messianic sense, but his argument seems to me rather strained and unconvincing.<sup>1</sup>

One extremely significant point that nearly all scholars agree upon is that the "Son of man" concept did not include the idea of rejection and suffering before Jesus came on the scene. Even Klausner seems to attest to this by his silence on the matter. The only possible objection that could be raised is that Daniel's Son of man is worn out and temporarily prevailed against in 7:21,25. But we must remember that this is the interpretation of the vision, that it is the "people of the saints of the Most High" who are rejected (not necessarily as Son of man), and that, in any event, they (he) are prevailed against, but not specifically made to suffer. And even if the objection is allowed, it remains an incidental reference and one that did not affect pre-Christian messianic thinking.

In New Testament literature the term occurs as Jesus' self-designation in all five major sources of gospel material: Mark (14 times), Q (11), M (6), L (6) and John (12). Thus it belongs to the common tradition behind the gospels, and stands within, or very near, the bedrock of history. Despite this evidence, however, there has remained a handful of hardy souls who deny that Jesus ever used the term of himself. Bousset formulated the case in Kyrios Christos, and made disciples of Branscomb and Grant. They claim the early Church applied the title to make intelligible the connection between his death and their faith in his return. But the fact that the early Church did not speak of Jesus this way (neither in creeds nor in informal writings), added to the source-evidence above, renders this view extremely unlikely. For a detailed refutation one is referred to Bowman's book The Intention of Jesus,

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1 - Dodd, C.H., The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel, pp. 241-242.





pp. 126-142.

There may be in the gospels some rather dubious uses of the phrase "Son of man" as a significant religious title. Several scholars feel that the Greek is the incorrect rendering of the Aramaic in Mk. 2:28 and Mt. 12:31, and that here we should read simply "man" instead of "Son of man." It is also felt that in a few places (e.g., Mk. 2:10) the persons passing the tradition along have substituted "Son of man" where Jesus originally said "I." There are two or three occurrences (e.g., Mk. 8:38) where Jesus may refer to a "Son of man" other than himself. None of these individual arguments is very convincing, but even if all were sustained there remain a large number of authentic and significant usages, and they are of three major types: the Parousia of the Son of man, the Passion of the Son of man, and miscellaneous and general utterances about the Son of man.

These major usages will provide the structure for our discussion of what Jesus' use of the term reveals of his self-consciousness. We will treat each type of saying in turn, although we realize that at several points they are not mutually exclusive. One of the main questions we must try to answer as we proceed in this pattern is the extent to which Jesus' use of the concept was similar to its earlier Jewish meaning(s). In this connection we would do well to have before us a statement by C.J. Cadoux:

"It is inherently likely that the meaning he gave to the term was striking and original; and we must therefore be on our guard against hastily adopting false clues, especially those that give results irreconcilable with what we know on less ambiguous evidence."<sup>1</sup>

This is not simply a judgement of faith; it is a sound principle of exegesis supported by the various New Testament portraits of Jesus.

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1 - Cadoux, C.J., op. cit., p. 91.





It is a supreme understatement to say that the eschatological passages,<sup>1</sup> telling of a heavenly Son of man coming in glory on the clouds, are difficult ones for the exegete. Both their authenticity and interpretation have drawn a wide range of disagreement. It is my belief that there is an inherent dislike, or suspicion of the Parousia sayings by scholars because they seem basically incongruous with the Jesus who taught on the hillside and who ate with sinners. This incongruity is not the same as inconsistency, which is more rational and logical. Rather, at least in the case at hand, it is a more subjective sensation which unconsciously colours one's interpretative efforts. A possible example of such a tension is seen in Taylor, who rejects what he calls the "apocalyptic colouring" of Mk. 8:38b, and Mk. 13:26, but cannot bring himself to deny that Jesus did speak of the heavenly Son of man coming as an eschatological figure.<sup>2</sup>

The Parousia passages may not hold the spiritual appeal for us that the other Son of man sayings do, but the fact is that they have the strongest support from the gospel sources. They are found in both Mark and Q; the Passion sayings are not found in Q. This evidence has caused such a critical scholar as Bultmann to accept their authenticity.<sup>3</sup> An indication of the complexity of this problem is seen in the fact that Branscomb, who accepts the same evidence, uses it to conclude that the sayings are not authentic.<sup>4</sup> However, Branscomb's conclusion seems to me to be highly inconsistent. Another credible reason advanced in favour of their historicity is that the early Christian Church would not have given its faith to Jesus if he did not look to some such future event.

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1 - Mk. 8:38; 13:26; 14:62 and para. Mt. 12:32 (Lk. 12:10); Mt. 24:27,37,39 (Lk. 17:26); Mt. 24:44 (Lk. 12:40); Mt. 10:23; 13:41 etc.

2 - Taylor, V., *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, pp. 120,383,519,569. The Life and Ministry of Jesus, p. 177. Jesus and His Sacrifice p. 30.

3 - Bultmann, R., *Theology of the New Testament*, I, p. 30. He feels these are the only authentic Son of man sayings.

4 - Branscomb, B.H., op. cit., p. 146.





The reason usually given for discrediting the eschatological Son of man passages is that they reflect the Advent hope of the early Christian communities more than they do the mind of Jesus. This argument cannot stand on its own merit, but it gains strength when it is alloyed with the fact that Jesus showed much reserve to the title "Messiah," and he would not have chosen "Son of man" (which in pre-Christian usage seemed to have even more "glory") without changing it considerably. This is true, and it leaves us with the conclusion that either Jesus didn't use it at all, or he gave substantial new content to the meaning. I believe the evidence upholds the latter alternative.

There are those who think Jesus' heavenly Son of man teaching was strongly influenced by Enoch,<sup>1</sup> but for the reason given in the preceding paragraph, and because Jesus alluded more to Daniel's Son of man figure (Mk. 14:62), they are a small minority. Taylor asserts: "In all His references to the Son of Man there is no certain trace of dependence upon the ideas of Enoch."<sup>2</sup> There is more inclination among scholars to see the influence of Daniel's Son of man in Jesus' use of the term, although the extent of such influence is highly debatable. That Daniel's Son of man is a more human figure, and Jesus' possible allusion to Dan. 7:13 on at least one occasion, allow the belief that Jesus had it on his mind and may even have derived it from Daniel. Even if this is granted, however, the witness of the gospels is that Jesus gave his own meaning to the term, and that the eschatological sayings do not provide the decisive key to the understanding of Jesus' appropriation and use of the term. The fact of Jesus' coolness towards a popular concept of glorious messiahship, plus the number and

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1 - A leading exponent is R. Otto, The Kingdom of God and The Son of Man. London: Lutterworth Press, 1951.

2 - Taylor, V., Jesus and His Sacrifice, p. 26.





profundity of Jesus' statements about the suffering Son of man leave no doubt on this matter.

In nine Markan passages<sup>1</sup> and their parallels, and in a few scattered references in other gospel sources, Jesus says that the Son of man (i.e., himself) must be rejected, be betrayed, suffer and be killed -- and that this is according to the scriptures (Mk. 14:21 and para.). As we have seen (p. 135 above), this is an entirely new teaching, particularly when the Son of man is also considered a messianic figure (a point we will treat shortly). Judaism did not conceive of a suffering Messiah; note Peter's horror at the thought in Mk. 8:38 and parallels. From the strictly human point of view, this juxtaposition was the zenith of Jesus' religious genius. And it is so well attested in the sources, and so in character with the total impression of the Jesus of the gospels (especially the synoptics), that it can scarcely be the work of the early Church. Such a creative concept is not the product of group dynamics; it originates in an individual human mind and becomes a reality in a rare human personality.

The priority of this emphasis over that of the heavenly figure in Jesus' mind is nowhere demonstrated more clearly than in his attitude towards service. In Dan. 7:14, the "one like a son of man" was given "dominion and glory and kingdom, that all peoples, nations and languages should serve him." In Mark 10:45 Jesus states the opposite view of his role: "the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve...." (Cf. Lk. 22:27). Here we have indisputable evidence that Jesus re-moulded the concept with his own depth of meaning. In Taylor's words: "He gave it life and made it determinative in His teaching and action."<sup>2</sup>

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1 - Mk. 8:31; 9:9,12,31; 10:33; 14:21,41.

2 - Taylor, V., The Gospel According to St. Mark, p. 120.



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What caused Jesus to develop such a formulation and apply it to himself? Here Sigmund Mowinckel would have us admit we are out of our depth:

"How Jesus reached this understanding of Himself is His own personal secret, which cannot be penetrated by any attempt at psychological explanation."<sup>1</sup>

Nearly all scholars, however, see the impact of the suffering servant of the Lord of Isa. 40-55 on our Lord's thought, and rightly so. But the fact that Jesus does not refer to him more directly and quotes him only once (in Lk. 22:37) should warn us that the connection is not automatic and exclusive. We must also recognize the influence of the Psalms and other prophets, while others have suggested the concept was inspired in Jesus by moral insight,<sup>2</sup> or the depths of his religious understanding.<sup>3</sup> While there is truth in all of these, we would single out three main forces at work in the formulation of Jesus' self-consciousness, particularly as it is revealed in the suffering Son of man concept: Jesus' communion with God, his knowledge and love of Scripture, and his experience among men. And is it not possible that the former two forces gave him his commission and the confidence it would be efficacious, and the latter inspired in him realization of the method that would be required? Or in other words, here we have the sources of the strange dichotomy in Jesus: the optimism and the pessimism, the idealism and the realism.

Since Jesus so obviously preferred the name "Son of man" to "Messiah," one might wonder if he considered the former a messianic title. The consensus among scholars, including Klausner, is that he did. Goguel feels that the ideas of messianic consciousness and suffering developed alongside each other in his thought and then merged, representing his

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1 - Mowinckel, S., op. cit., p. 447.

2 - Bowman, J.W., op. cit., p. 144.

3 - Manson, W., Jesus The Messiah, p. 164.





optimism (faith in God) and his pessimism (experience with men) respectively.<sup>1</sup> Certainly in both major uses of the title Jesus implied he was fulfilling the religious destiny of Israel, and by most standards this would be considered a messianic function, whether or not it tallied with the current popular conceptions of the Messiah.

T.W. Manson proposes that Jesus as Son of man becomes messianic in a corporate sense because he is the embodiment of the true Israel (as in Daniel 7).<sup>2</sup> Thus he introduces the "individual-corporate" controversy into Jesus' understanding of "the Son of man." Manson holds that the Remnant idea runs throughout Jesus' Son of man and kingdom of God teachings, and that the disciples were to have provided the nucleus for this Remnant. He cites the fact that the first Passion prophecy is followed by Jesus' challenge to his followers to deny themselves and take up his cross (Mk. 8:34-36 and para.) and that the third prophecy is followed by the statement to James and John that they would drink his cup and be baptized with his baptism (Mk. 10:42-44 and para.). Thus, in his view, Jesus sees himself as the embodiment and Leader of this true Remnant when he calls himself "Son of man."

Manson's hypothesis has won considerable support, either in full or in part.<sup>3</sup> He admits, however, that Jesus' usage appears to fluctuate between sayings capable of corporate and individual interpretations, and explains the latter by saying that in the end the disciples, who were supposed to be part of the true community, fell away and left Jesus to stand alone, embodying the demands of the ideal in himself. I feel this

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1 - Goguel, M., op. cit., p. 577. It will be noted that Goguel's thought provided the seed for our conclusion in the previous paragraph.

2 - Manson, T.W., The Servant-Messiah, p. 72.

3 - E.g., Bright, J., The Kingdom of God. New York: Abingdon Press, 1953, p. 202. Cf. Cadoux, C.J., op. cit., p. 91.



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argument is very forced, and that the relevant New Testament passages do not admit of a corporate interpretation. I cite John 5:25-27, where the three terms "Son of God," "Son" and "Son of man" are all used interchangeably; "Son of God" is inherently incapable of a corporate meaning. Also, Manson bases his argument almost entirely on the corporate interpretation he draws from Dan. 7, and it has been shown that in other respects (service, p. 139 above) Jesus did not take over the Danielic figure's role, but an opposite one.

In attempting to combine and relate what Jesus' two major uses of the term "Son of man" reveal of his divine consciousness we have found most helpful a formulation submitted by Bowman. He suggests that the usages reflect two main motifs in the thought of Jesus: exaltation and humiliation. It works this way:

"This term, because of its eschatological reference, could be made to serve for the eventual exaltation of the Messiah. At the same time it was sufficiently mundane to allow the attachment to itself of the motif of humiliation and suffering, which was native to the Servant concept."<sup>1</sup>

Thus Jesus united, and realized in himself, the three major concepts of Hebrew prophecy and eschatology: the Messiah, the Suffering Servant, and the Son of man, choosing the last as the most suitable title to express his consciousness of his Nature and his Vocation.

The suitability of the title is confirmed when we consider the third classification of its usages in the gospels: those miscellaneous passages which don't fall into either of the two main categories. These references are usually passed over in the Son of man discussions, except when one is cited to reinforce an argument of some sort. However, I

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1 - Bowman, J.W., op. cit., p. 151.





believe they yield one clue that has been overlooked: they show that Jesus did not take on the phrase "Son of man" as an inflexible role. Rather, it was to him something more personal: it described his character and his feelings, as well as his Person and Work in the more classical sense. It was the "Son of man" who came eating and drinking (Mt. 11:19, Lk. 7:34), who can be cursed (Mt. 12:32, Lk. 12:10), who sows seed (Mt. 13:37), who seeks the lost (Lk. 19:10), and who has nowhere to lay his head (Mt. 8:20, Lk. 9:58).

Finally, I must confess I have long suspected that Jesus used this phrase because it was obscure and enigmatic, incapable of comprehension and classification. He was astute enough a judge of human nature to know that we would like to classify and pigeon-hole him, and this is what he did not want. I was surprised to find that this rather homely and artless hypothesis has been expressed by at least two top-ranking New Testament scholars. Goguel's is a choice bit of understatement: "The title was a little mysterious and elastic, which made it more suitable than some other terms in current use to express new ideas."<sup>1</sup> Cadoux is only slightly less cautious: "Possibly Jesus was himself aware that the term was ambiguous, and purposely used it partly for that reason."<sup>2</sup>

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1 - Goguel, M., op. cit., pp. 576-577.

2 - Cadoux, C.J., op. cit., p. 102.





## 2. Jesus and the Old Testament Prophetic Consciousness

"Thus says the Lord:....!"

This booming declaration occurs three hundred and forty-nine times in the Old Testament. The person who speaks it is usually one of those fascinating figures unique in the history of religion: the Hebrew prophet.

It is difficult for us, living in the twentieth century, to understand how a human being could claim to receive and speak the Word of God so directly. There is no modesty or humility or subtlety or apology in the assertion -- and this bothers us, because we seem to like these qualities in our modern western religion. We have come, unfortunately, a long way from the vividness and theocentricity of the Hebrew mind. How could these fellows be so brash and presumptuous as to proclaim that they had the direct Word of Almighty God? How could they be so sure? What made them feel this way?

The answer is to be found in a concept as peculiar and unique as the prophet himself: the Hebrew prophetic consciousness. Essentially, this was the prophet's absolute conviction that he was divinely called to proclaim the will and word of the Lord, and the conviction that God revealed this Word to him from time to time.

The concept of the prophetic consciousness is relevant to our study for two major reasons: Jesus was, among other things, a prophet;<sup>1</sup> Jesus was a good Jew and a student of the scriptures, whose understanding of revelation would be largely in terms of the prophetic consciousness.

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1 - Mk. 6:4 and para.; Mt. 21:11; Lk. 4:24; 7:16; 13:33; 24:19.





That this concept favourably and deeply impressed him is evident in his admiration for John the Baptist, in whom the living Word became a reality again after nearly four ~~cent~~ centuries of silence.

In the earliest portion of his public ministry, Jesus took the role of a prophet:<sup>1</sup> not just an ordinary prophet, but, as Cullman has argued, that of The Eschatological Prophet.

"The function of the eschatological Prophet in the Jewish texts consists primarily in preparing the people of Israel and the world by his preaching for the coming of the Kingdom of God. He fulfills this function, not simply as the former Old Testament prophets did, but in a much more direct way as the immediate Preparer of the way for the Kingdom of God itself. He comes endowed with unique eschatological authority. His call to repentance is final....This gives his preaching a final, absolute character such as the preaching of the ancient prophets did not have."<sup>2</sup>

Evidence that such a singular prophetic figure was expected in the first century A.D. is found in the Jews' question to John the Baptist in John 1:21: "Are you the prophet?" Thus it appears undeniable that Jesus did draw from the concept of prophetic consciousness in the formulation of his own self-consciousness. It then becomes our job to see how Jesus compared with, and transcended, this method of understanding and revealing God's will.

There are several ways in which the development of divine consciousness in Jesus paralleled that of the Hebrew prophets. The first and cardinal requisite for prophecy was a call from God, and this Jesus received at his baptism. One of the characteristics of several Old Testament prophets' calls was that they were seen as well as heard; Jesus saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove at his baptism.

In the Old Testament, the prophet and his prophecy were

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1 - Mk. 1:15 and para.; Mk. 1:38 and para.; Mk. 6:4; Lk. 4:16-21.

2 - Cullman, O., op. cit., p. 43.





greatest at times of crisis. Jesus was born into a generation of crisis, and his first recorded (Luke excepted) sensations of being called to a divine function came upon the heels of the Baptist's appearance, which may have been more of a religious crisis in Israel at the time than we now realize.

In the great prophets, prophetic inspiration was not purely an arbitrary process. These men were close to God in their daily life, a fact best seen in the life of Jeremiah. Certainly if there is one impression that stands out in the Jesus of the gospels, it is the reality and closeness of his communion with God. Jesus also follows the prophetic tradition in not telling us, at least in so many words, how the Word of God came to him. Even Jeremiah, who admits us more than any other to the inner privacy of the prophetic consciousness, does not spell out for us how the Word came to him. The best clue, however, is that it comes from prayer. As Jeremiah once waited ten days in prayer for God's Word (Jer. 42:1-7), so Jesus threw himself into earnest, sweating prayer when he sought God's will in Gethsemane.

The content of Jesus' teaching, especially in the early phase of his public ministry, had affinities with the highest prophetic message, particularly in its eschatological emphasis. This fact has caused Bultmann to suggest that the prophetic consciousness, by its nature, always expects the imminent judgement of God: that to the prophetic consciousness, the sovereignty of God and the absoluteness of His will is so overpowering that before it the world sinks away and seems to be at its end.<sup>1</sup> He believes this same feeling influenced Jesus, with consequential results in his teaching.

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1 - Bultmann, R., op. cit., I, p. 22.





However, while there are ways in which Jesus' sense of call to a divine function parallels that of the prophets, there are more significant ways in which his divine self-consciousness surpasses and transcends theirs. Nor is the difference in degree; it is in kind.

One of the major differences is in the manner in which Jesus and the prophets received and related the revelation that came to them. Although he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove at his baptism, Jesus never claimed to see the Word of God, as did at least three major prophets.<sup>1</sup> Nor did he receive his inspiration in an abnormal ecstasy as some of the canonical prophets did. We must note that Jesus was ~~not~~ not unique here, however, because Amos and Jeremiah also distrusted such emotional stress, considering it the mark of a false prophet. Nor did Jesus ever use the traditional prophetic introductory formula

אֲנִי אָמַר אֵלֶיכֶם ; there is no neat pattern for the beginning of his various teachings, although "Truly, truly, I say to you" and "You have heard that it was said of old...but I say to you" each occur several times.

This latter phrase gives us an insight into the mind of Jesus. It may be argued, of course, that all three of the phrases mentioned above were traditional formulas to introduce a message or teaching, and may never have been uttered by our Lord. However, it is likely that the second phrase above attributed to Jesus is genuinely his, because it is far too daring and presumptuous to be traditional. The phrase shows that Jesus was conscious of having in his person a specially-derived authority to make moral and religious assertions. In some cases he simply enlarges

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1 - Amos 1:1; Isa. 2:1; Micah 1:1.





upon the earlier law (Mt. 5:21,27,33), but in others he overrules the law of old (5:31,38,43). And the three laws which he reverses are not obscure food regulations; they concern such vital issues as revenge, divorce, and love and hate.

This sense of authority alone is enough to put Jesus beyond the class of the prophets because he gave himself as the authority for which he did and said these things (Mk. 2:10 and para.). No prophet would think of doing this. This sense of a transcendent authority is seen in another way in Mk. 10:5, where Jesus claims to know why Moses, the greatly-revered law-giver, gave the commandment on divorce. It was not part of the normal prophetic consciousness to explain why various commandments were given, much less to overrule them!

Another significant difference between the divine consciousness of Jesus and the prophetic consciousness was that the awareness was permanent in Jesus, while the prophets were inspired only at particular moments on particular issues. The prophets themselves would be the first to admit this. An apt illustration is found in Jer. 42:1-7, where Jeremiah waits ten days for "the word of the Lord" to come to him. The gospels convey the impression that, once the forty-day forging period in the wilderness was over, Jesus was never very far out of touch with the Heavenly Father's will. Gethsemane may be an exception, but one wonders if Jesus didn't really know the Father's will already, as the wording of the prayer suggests. Nor do we get the impression from Jesus that he is a throaty, pontifical messenger from the divine courtroom, announcing a heavenly decree, which was the manner of certain prophets. Rather, he was called "Teacher" -- with affection and admiration.





The greatest difference between Jesus and the prophets was that his self-consciousness was primarily a filial consciousness, and secondarily a prophetic consciousness. The idea of God's Fatherhood and his own Sonship, first manifested at the baptism, was with Jesus throughout his ministry. It was from this sense of Sonship that Jesus actually derived the authority we cited earlier. He felt that authority within himself, but only because he knew the Father's will perfectly from close, constant communion. His authority was drawn from the Father.

The divine Sonship is a favourite theme in John, but it also finds its full expression once in "Q":

"All things have been delivered to me by my Father;  
and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one  
knows the Father except the Son, and any one to whom  
the Son chooses to reveal him."<sup>1</sup>

Here we see Jesus' sense of Sonship at its zenith; it also had its nadir (in the synoptics only). It was as a Son that Jesus felt the agony in Gethsemane. The prophets, despite their anguish at having to be spokesmen of God's judgement upon their own people, did not know this kind of a trough. Such is the difference between the agony of prophecy and the agony of Sonship.

Thus Jesus drew upon, and fulfilled, the best that was in the Hebrew concept of prophetic consciousness. But he transcended it in a way that was not an evolutionary development, but a mutation. The clerk of court could never hope to know the judge in the way that the judge is known by his only son.

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1 - Mt. 11:27; Luke 10:22.



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### 3. Towards A Christology

What Jesus thought of himself must be an integral part of any Christological construction. This does not mean, however, that anything we cannot attribute to Jesus' self-consciousness is unsuitable building material. Indeed, depending on our view of the interaction of "humanity" and "divinity" in the historical Jesus, we may even dare to say that he could have been wrong about himself -- either way. He could have over-estimated himself (does the cry of dereliction suggest this?), or he could have under-estimated himself ("Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone.").

It is not our purpose here to outline a Christology. An adequate Christological formulation requires confrontation with the Christ of faith, as well as with the Jesus of history, and in this thesis we have been considering only the latter. The paucity of indisputable evidence, seen in Part II, reminds us that a Christology based entirely on the historical Jesus cannot rise beyond the tentative and the speculative. Rather, we wish only to advance some guiding principles that the study of Jesus' self-consciousness bids us consider in any attempt at Christology. I would offer ten of them.

1. We must take full cognizance of the depth and complexity of the problem if we are to make any serious attempt to grapple with it. We must see the layers of selection of materials, imperfect perception and faulty transmission that we must sift through to get back into the mind of the historical Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

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1 - see above, pp. 4-6.

The first of these is the fact that the city of Boston was founded in 1630 by a group of Puritan settlers who came to the New World seeking religious freedom and a better life. They established a colony on the eastern shore of Massachusetts Bay, and the city grew rapidly. By 1690, Boston was the largest city in the New England region, and it remained so for many years. The city's growth was due to a number of factors, including its strategic location on the coast, its access to trade routes, and the presence of a large and skilled workforce. The city's economy was based on commerce and industry, and it played a major role in the development of the American colonies.

The second factor in the city's growth was the presence of a large and skilled workforce. The city attracted many immigrants from Europe, and these immigrants brought with them a variety of skills and talents. The city's economy was based on commerce and industry, and it played a major role in the development of the American colonies. The city's growth was due to a number of factors, including its strategic location on the coast, its access to trade routes, and the presence of a large and skilled workforce. The city's economy was based on commerce and industry, and it played a major role in the development of the American colonies.

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2. We must regain the ability to see Jesus as the gospel portraits painted him in their unity, as well as in their analyzed parts.<sup>1</sup> If God was nurturing His Church in the first century, did he not guide his servants in the preparation and selection of our Scriptures? Or has He been feeding us poisoned food these nineteen centuries? The Biblical view is not infallible; neither is it expendable.

3. We would do well, when we investigate Jesus' understanding of himself, to refer to his divine consciousness rather than his messianic consciousness. The latter word is more limiting, refers only to function, and does not include in itself the concept of Sonship, which was an essential part of Jesus' self-consciousness.

4. There was an emergence or growth in Jesus' understanding of himself and his mission. In his early public ministry he felt his work to be that of a proclaimer of the imminent kingdom of God. His first preaching was closely patterned after that of John the Baptist. Later, he felt himself to be an instrument of the kingdom's coming.

5. A trilogy of events culminating in Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi were among the prime factors in this development, and were instrumental in guiding Jesus to his final understanding of himself and his mission.<sup>2</sup> These events were very human and natural, and they made him realize that the outcome of his ministry was to be tragic, at least from a human point of view. The three important events were: Jesus' hearing about John the Baptist's murder, the withdrawal to the region of Tyre and Sidon, and Caesarea Philippi.

6. It is highly probable that Jesus felt himself to be, in

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1 - see above, pp. 6,7.

2 - see above, pp. 81 ff.





some sense, the Messiah.<sup>1</sup> He believed himself to be the one in whom the religious expectation of Israel was to be fulfilled. Jesus accepted the title but did not use it: this points to a significant re-interpretation of the concept of the Messiah.<sup>2</sup>

7. We cannot be certain about the extent to which Jesus derived his self-understanding from the picture of the Suffering Servant of Second Isaiah. The fact that he is recorded to have quoted Isa. 53 only once (and then in a single source) prohibits a facile and automatic identification. To make the tie-up we are forced to refer to general attitudes and possible allusions, which, fortunately, are quite strong.<sup>3</sup>

8. The term or concept that likely holds the key to the mystery is "Son of man." This was Jesus' title for himself. To apprehend what he meant by it is extremely difficult, perhaps impossible. He seemed to use it in at least two major ways: for a lowly, earthly figure and a heavenly eschatological figure. But he may have used it simply because it was such an enigmatic concept, or because it expressed both his exaltation and his humiliation (the latter being his unique contribution to the content of the concept).<sup>4</sup>

9. We must admit a full humanity in Jesus. The agony in Gethsemane and the cry of dereliction allow no other interpretation.

10. When we attempt to sum up Jesus' consciousness of his relation to God, we might put it in one word: Sonship. This was perhaps Jesus' most unique contribution to our understanding of God, and reflects light on our understanding of Jesus himself.

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1 - see above, pp. 89 ff.

2 - see above, pp. 125 ff.

3 - see above, p. 92.

4 - see above, pp. 131-143.



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